KEY-ITEM REPORT ■ CATALAN CUISINE ■ CHEF INTERVIEWS

THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

VOL. 10 □ NO. 8 □ SEPTEMBER 1990

We're glad you're here!

# RESTAURANTS USA

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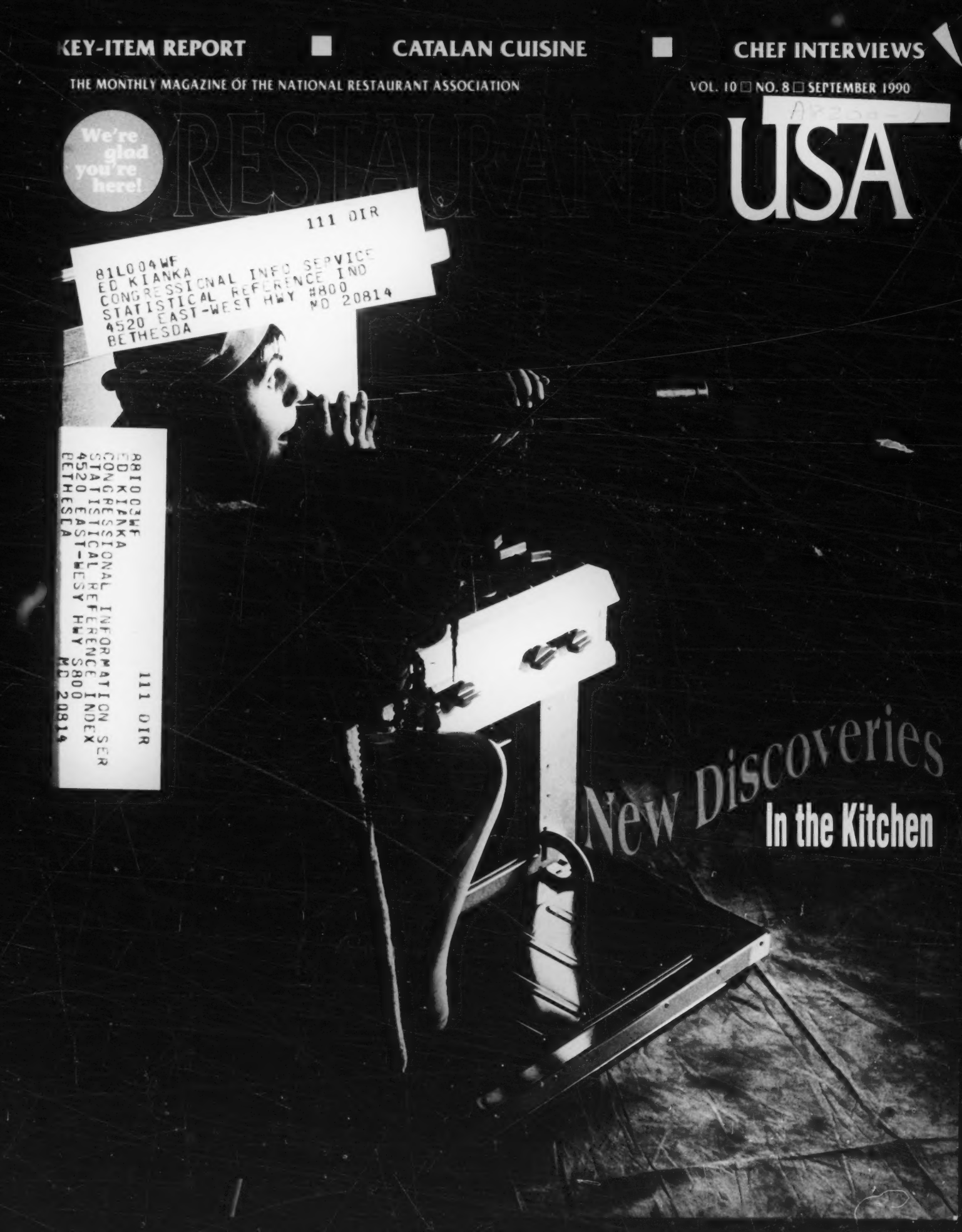


## New Discoveries In the Kitchen

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**Michael E. Hurst, owner**
**15th Street Fisheries, Ft. Lauderdale, FL**

Political affairs are always a top priority at National Restaurant Association headquarters in Washington, but September has come to be the most important month for political activity. As an annual highlight of our industry's lobbying efforts, the association's Public Affairs Conference takes place this year from September 24 to September 26 at the Capital Hilton Hotel in Washington DC. I hope you will participate in this important conference.

Several Washington insiders will be featured speakers this year, providing conference attendees with legislative updates and strategies for successful lobbying. After being briefed on current legislative issues, you will have a chance to add your voice to the association's lobbying efforts by meeting with your legislators on Capitol Hill. Association staff will schedule the meetings for you.

Finally, as a social highlight, the annual *Chef d'oeuvre* reception will give you the opportunity to meet with your senators and representatives in a social setting amidst fine food prepared by several of Washington's top restaurants. This elegant event has become more popular each year and is now a must-attend event for scores of legislators.

For more information, call Diane Dorman in the association's government affairs department at 1-800-424-5156 or (202) 331-5900.

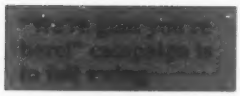
This year's conference comes at a crucial time. As I write this, the recent legislation passed by both houses concerning civil rights appears headed for a certain, and sustainable, veto by President Bush. The association supports the administration's position on the bill because, as presently worded, it would create many areas of conflict between employers and employees.

This year's budget negotiations between the administration and Congress have been particularly strained, and no easy solution to the deficit problem is in sight. Association lobbyists in Washington are on guard for any "desperation" tax bills that Congress might aim at small businesses. In particular, our association will fight to be sure that there is no further erosion of the tax deduction for the business-marketing meal.

As you probably know, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was recently signed into law, and it is now incumbent upon us to find out how to comply. On January 8, 1991, the National Restaurant Association will hold a one-day symposium in Washington DC to outline the specifics of ADA and to help pinpoint any changes that must be made in foodservice operations. More information on this educational event will be available soon.

Applications for 1991 National Restaurant Association teacher work-study grants and H.J. Heinz fellowships will be available soon from the association's educational foundation. This year, more than $46,000 was awarded to 26 foodservice educators from around the country, providing them with opportunities to gain valuable knowledge and industry experience they can share

with students in the classroom. Grants are given as supplemental income for educators during work/study employment, and fellowships are awarded to those pursuing graduate degrees. Applications for these awards must be postmarked no later than December 31, 1990. For more information, contact the foundation's scholarship services department at 1-800-765-2122.



The association's "We're glad you're here!" campaign is in full swing, promoting our industry's renewed commitment to hospitality. The association mailed 35,000 brochures and order forms several weeks ago, explaining the program's goals and offering 19 items for sale that bear the "We're glad you're here!" logo. If you did not receive a mailing or if you would like more information, call the association's communications department at 1-800-424-5156 or (202) 331-5900.

If you ever wonder how your operation's numbers stack up against those of similar establishments, the new *Restaurant Industry Operations Report—1990* allows you to make such a comparison. You can read about the report in the Foodservice Trends section of this issue of ***Restaurants USA.***

I am glad to report that 54 new members joined the National Restaurant Association in August. We welcome you and hope you will begin to reap the benefits of membership by participating in association activities.

Sincerely,

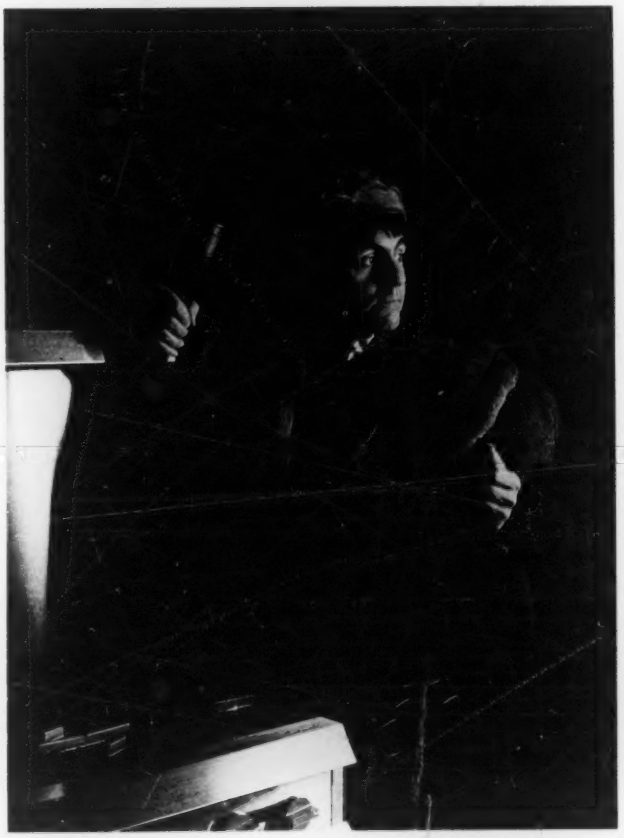
Michael E. Hurst

Michael E. Hurst
President and Chairman of the Board

RESTAURANTS USA

## COVER STORY: New discoveries in the kitchen

As new ideas emerge, the restaurant kitchen keeps changing—and so are foodservice chefs.



## SPECIALS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No reviewer has tasted their wares, no camera has captured their faces. The public doesn't even know they exist, much less how well they cook. Yet the culinary skills of these sequestered chefs rise to olympic heights.

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Why you should plan menu items to sell out.

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It makes sense to track the high-usage and high-cost food items in your kitchen.

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One chef's discovery of the fruity, spicy taste of chutney—the Indian condiment that can liven up a menu.

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The personal interview can be a deciding factor in the search for the right chef.

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***Restaurants USA*** talked to baker Jim Dodge, who believes that the benefits of charity work go far beyond P.R.

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The profile of the artist under the white hat is rapidly changing.

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Restaurant inspectors search for practices that keep foods safe.


*Cover photo by Gary Landsman. Range supplied by Vulcan Hart Co.*

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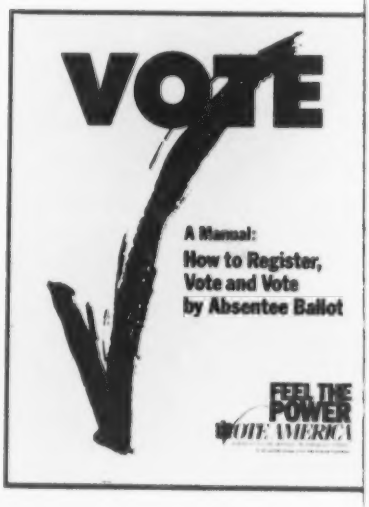
## Clothes for charity

***An army of pants,* skirts, and aprons landed at The Salvation Army's Adult Rehabilitation Center in Detroit this summer. More than 1,200 men's and women's pants and 600 aprons, shirts and skirts were donated to The Salvation Army by A&W Restaurants, Inc., and Angelica Uniform Group. The garments, valued at $10,000, will be distributed to Salvation Army shelters and corps community centers throughout the metropolitan Detroit area. "When our new uniform design program was implemented, we decided to donate whatever unused stock we had to The Salvation Army," says Wendy Rose, public relations manager for A&W Restaurants, Inc.**

## Help employees and patrons pull the lever

Election day is November 6, and Americans everywhere will have a chance to exercise their most fundamental democratic right: the right to vote. Unfortunately, during the last election only about half of all Americans voted—one of the worst levels of voter turnout in the world.

The National Restaurant Association encourages you to make your restaurant a center of voter involvement in the community. You can promote participation by sponsoring awareness programs in three key areas: voter registration (which must be promoted well before election time), absentee voting (for those travel-






## A solution to "no-shows"

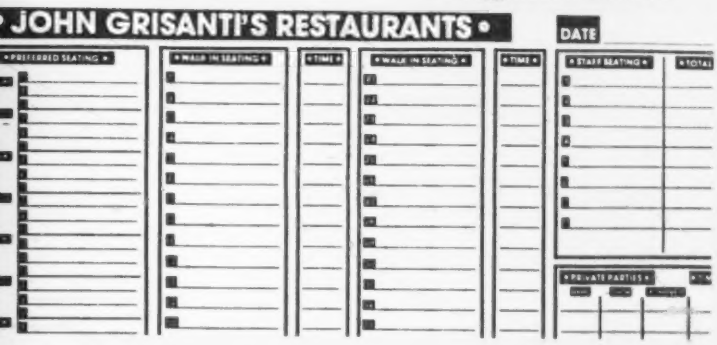
Dear Editor:
I read with interest the article on Page 47 of the June/July 1990 issue of ***Restaurants USA*** concerning reservation of "no-shows." I'd like to share an idea we have created at Grisanti's that might alleviate no-shows and other problems related to restaurants taking reservations.

Our system, called Preferred Seating, allows us to take a number of seatings every 30 minutes. Please see the accompanying chart. It works like this: A customer calls for a seating and specifies 7:00 p.m. If we have an opening, we will place the caller's name in the 7:00 p.m. slot (we allow three names per time slot; other restaurants might allow more than three.) If the 7:00 p.m. slot is filled, we suggest 6:30 or 7:30 p.m. This enables us to have a steady flow of customers. When the customer arrives at the appointed time and if there is a line, he or she goes to the top of the list. (Patrons waiting in line must understand the policy, and of course, we explain it to our customers.)

The system prevents several potential problems. If the customer doesn't show up, it is no problem, because with so few reservations per half-hour we can easily fill the no-show slot from our waiting list. Also, we do not have open tables with a long line of waiting customers. This has worked extremely well for us for almost two years.

If you would like more details, please feel free to call me.

**—John A. Grisanti, Sr.**
**John Grisanti's Restaurants**
**Memphis, Tennessee**




## How to make promotions work for you

□ *Don't make the mistake of seeing—and treating—guests who use promotional offers as freeloaders.* Don't give them a bad table, small portions or cut-rate service. If you do, they may never come back, which defeats the whole purpose of promotional offers. Instead, shower these diners with *extra* attention—it will be a pleasant surprise to them.

□ *Be sure to make the offer worth the customers' while.* Don't expect them to pay $50 to eat at an untried restaurant just for a free glass of wine. An offer can be reasonable for both parties if you use your markup figure as a guide for es-

ing on election day) and voting at the polls (November 6).

The Vote America Foundation, an organization dedicated to promoting voter involvement, has materials that can help you promote the importance of voting. You can use the ideas in Vote America's "Feel the Power" manual to set up a voter-awareness campaign for both your employees and patrons. Also available are table tents, sample letters and press releases that will announce your participation. For more information, contact the Vote America Foundation, 1200 19th Street, N.W., Suite 603, Washington DC 20036. Or call (202) 659-4595.

timating how much you can spare.

□ *When business is slow, remember that your overhead costs are constant* and that empty chairs represent a sale lost forever. A discounted seat not only generates some income, it can also bring in new business.

□ *When business is good, remember that even the best restaurants need a constant stream of new customers* and that sales promotions are one way to entice them.

□ *Remember that you will have to contact many POTENTIAL customers to obtain a few ACTUAL customers.*

**—Dick Solay, Senior vice president, Al Paul Lefton Company, Inc., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and managing director of The Solay Group, the company's sales promotion division**

## A touch of London in a Mississippi tavern

"Friends don't let friends drive drunk," reads the warning in the pages of the menu at Scrooge's restaurant in Jackson, Mississippi; and the restaurant follows that reminder with an offer that can't be beat—"Complimentary Scrooge's London Taxi available." "We always provide rides home for those who've had too much to drink," says owner Bill Latham.

Latham purchased the the fully functioning 1967 taxi about 10 years ago from the previous owner, who had it shipped directly from England. The cab is one of 700 to 800 old London hacks now registered in the United States.

The taxi—emblazoned with the restaurant's logo—is also available for weddings or nights out on the town that begin and end at Scrooge's. "It's a definite eyestopper," says Latham, "a rolling billboard."

According to Latham, the hardest thing to do is keep the cab running. "It's not easy to work on," he says. But at Scrooge's they do keep it running, and it's always there when needed. "If they've had too much [to drink]," says Latham, "all they have to do is ask for a ride home."

**Scrooge's offers patrons complimentary rides home in a genuine London taxi.**

## 400 now certified by NAFEM

With the recent certification of 65 new foodservice professionals, the Certified Foodservice Professional (CFSP) program, administered by the National Association of Food Equipment Manufacturers (NAFEM), has vaulted past the 400-member mark. Requirements for earning CFSP recognition include the successful completion of a written examination, documented evidence of foodservice industry-related experience, participation in continuing education programs and demonstrated leadership in foodservice, community and a variety of related activities. For more information, contact Patty Urell, NAFEM, 111 E. Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 644-6610.

The National Fisheries Institute's 1990 convention will be held November 4 to 7 at the San Francisco Marriott Hotel in San Francisco. For more information, call (703) 524-8881.

## Seven educators win fellowships

Seven foodservice/hospitality educators received awards totaling $8,200 in the 1990 Heinz Graduate Degree Fellowship Program, awarded by The Educational Foundation of the National Restaurant Association.

Selected from a group of more than 50 applicants were

□ *Mary Cluskey*, instructor, Oregon State University, Albany. She received a $2,000 fellowship to pursue a doctorate in food-systems management and

□ *Nadine Mann*, child-nutrition supervisor, East Baton Rouge School System, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She was awarded $1,200 to pursue a doctorate in food-systems management.

Recipients of $1,000 graduate degree fellowships were

□ *Jiaqiang Chen*, instructor, San Jacinto College, San Jacinto, Texas, who is studying for a master's degree in hospitality management,

□ *John Dienhart*, instructor, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, who is pursuing a doctorate in institution management,

□ *Catherine English*, assistant professor, University of Rhode Island, Providence, who is studying for a doctorate in higher education,

□ *Iain Murray*, assistant professor, University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada, who is studying for a doc-

torate in institution management and

□ *Christopher Muller*, instructor, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, who is pursuing a doctorate in hotel administration.

Winners of the annual awards are selected by leading educators and foodservice hospitality industry leaders on the educational foundation's fellowship committee.

## Hotel discounts for association members

National Restaurant Association members can save a full 50 percent off hotel room charges if they enroll in Quest International. More than 1,500 hotels, motels and resort condominiums honor Quest members with a half-price savings on their regular room charges.

Participating properties include Holiday Inns, Hiltons, Sheratons, Westins, Radissons and many others in locations throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Bahamas and as far away as France, Denmark and Greece.

National Restaurant Association members can enroll in Quest for just $19.95, a substantial savings compared to the regular retail cost of $99. The price includes a complete, no-risk, money-back guarantee. To order, send a check to "National Restaurant Association Quest Offer," One Lake Aspen Park, P.O. Box 22800, Yakima, WA 98907-2800. Please include the NRA access number, #1863, and $1.95 for processing and handling. To order by credit card, call 1-800-STAY-4-50 (1-800-782-9450).

## Storm brewing over alcohol tax

*Congress may soon reform the Special Occupational Tax on alcohol retailers that has had restaurateurs up in arms since BATF began to collect back taxes aggressively from unsuspecting restaurateurs.*

As Congress and the White House prepare to wrap up a tax bill by October 1, the beginning of the next fiscal year, restaurateurs will have their eyes on one of the legislation's smaller-ticket items: the possible modification of a $250 Special Occupational Tax on alcohol retailers (SOT).

Since Congress increased the underpublicized tax in 1987, the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) has aggressively collected large sums of back taxes, penalties and interest from restaurateurs, grocers and others who sell alcohol. Retailers say they never knew about the tax; BATF says ignorance is no excuse. This leaves Congress to decide whether and how to give operators relief.

### Tax hike spurs enforcement

The federal government began collecting the SOT from alcohol wholesalers and retailers in 1866, charging retailers—including restaurants and bars—$25 per unit per year for the right to sell liquor. By 1959 the tax, due each July 1, had increased to $54, with a discounted rate of $24 for stores that sold only beer.

In the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987, a revenue-hungry Congress hiked the tax to $250 for all alcohol retailers and shifted the enforcement responsibility from the Internal Revenue Service to BATF. Congress also broadened

## DCROUNDUP

□ *IRS releases "tentative findings" of tip study.* The Internal Revenue Serv-ice will release its long-awaited study on tip reporting and tipping patterns "in the near future," IRS witness Marshall Washburn promised a House subpanel at a July 24 hearing.

The report, scheduled to be delivered to Congress almost four years ago, is required by the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982.

According to Washburn, the study's "tentative findings" estimate that the average nationwide tipping rate is 11.9 percent and that employees in establishments covered by TEFRA's tip-reporting provisions (employers with 10 or more workers) are now reporting only about half of their tip income.

□ *Democrats marshal civil rights bill through House.* After rejecting a National Restaurant Association-supported compromise proposed by House Small Business Committee Chairman John LaFalce (D-NY), the House voted 272 to 154 in favor of H.R. 4000, the Civil Rights Act of 1990. Under extreme pressure from House Democratic leaders, all but 12 of the chamber's Democrats voted for the legislation.

Critics predict H.R. 4000, which overturns at least five U.S. Supreme Court rulings, would force employers to hire by quota to avoid discrimination charges and could encourage excessive litigation by allowing plaintiffs to collect compensatory and punitive damages in job-bias cases. Successful plaintiffs are currently limited to reinstatement, back pay and court costs.

House and Senate negotiators will meet this month to reconcile differences between H.R. 4000 and S. 2104, companion legislation passed in the Senate in July. President Bush, who has indicated he opposes both versions of the bill, is expected to veto the legislation.

□ *Alcohol taxes on the front burner.* As Congress and the White House meet to fashion a deficit-reduction bill before the next fiscal year begins on October 1, alcohol excise taxes are sure to be one item on the agenda.

Shortly before the negotiating team broke off budget talks in July, White House officials floated a preliminary proposal that would raise at least $7 billion a year by increasing the current 16-cent tax on a six-pack of beer to 80 cents, the three-cent tax on a bottle of wine to 76 cents and the $1.09 tax on a bottle of liquor to $2.54.

The announcement met with a firestorm of protest from the alcohol industry, state and local officials wary of incursions into their own taxing powers and groups that argue that alcohol-excise tax increases are regressive, because they hurt low-income Americans more than other groups.

*—Denise Roach*

the tax's coverage to include other businesses involved in the alcohol industry, among them distillers and alcohol-fuel plants.

Because the tax had always been low and had applied to only a limited segment of the alcohol industry, the IRS never put much effort into publicizing or enforcing the so-called "user fee," collecting less than $27 million from the tax in 1987.

However, given the higher tax rate, more businesses to collect from and broad powers to assess back taxes, BATF began collecting the SOT with vigor when the increase took effect January 1, 1988. By 1989, surprised alcohol sellers were getting letters from BATF demanding large payments for several-year-old taxes. BATF expects to collect more than $130 million from the tax this year.

## Tax hits hard

"I don't object to paying taxes, but I strenuously object to having the government penalize me $8,500 in interest and penalties because of its own neglect in informing its citizens," says Ed Hartman, owner of the Chesapeake Marine Tours in Annapolis, Maryland.

Hartman, who hires up to 44 crew members to operate a fleet of 10 tour boats during peak summer months, read a newspaper article about the tax in the fall of 1989. A faithful taxpayer for 40 years, Hartman contacted BATF to see whether he owed the tax.

"In gratitude for searching them out, they told us that each boat represented a separate premises, and we were responsible for taxes on all six boats that serve alcohol plus full penalties and interest," says Hartman, who is still disputing a total tax bill of about $14,000.

**"I don't object to paying taxes, but I strenuously object to having the government penalize me $8,500 in interest and penalties because of its own neglect in informing its citizens," says Ed Hartman.**

## Ignorance is no excuse

Harry Pass, chief of the BATF-tax-compliance branch, which coordinates the eight regional offices that collect the tax, says a "mere lack of knowledge is insufficient" to excuse restaurateurs from paying penalties and interest on the back taxes. He says BATF will continue to enforce the law to the letter unless Congress legislates otherwise.

Like hundreds of other restaurateurs around the country, Barbara Asimos, co-owner of the Asimakopoulos Cafe in San Francisco, has seen BATF's hard-line stance up close. BATF sent Asimos a letter last year demanding $1,800 for alcohol taxes dating back to 1981 from her 30-employee Greek bistro. After trying unsuccessfully to get BATF to forgive the penalty and interest charges, she paid the bill in full.

Asimos, who never knew the tax existed before she received BATF's letter, called the experience "fundraising by extortion." "They were totally unwilling to work with us to find a reasonable solution to the problem," Asimos says.

## Congress, White House respond to complaints

Hartman, Asimos and others are hoping their horror stories will prod Congress into giving operators some relief from overzealous collection of the tax.

In response to complaints from restaurateurs and other alcohol-selling constituents, several members of Congress introduced bills (H.R. 2285 and S. 1610) last year to prevent BATF from collecting taxes due before January 1, 1988, or any penalties and interest on these back taxes.

At Congress's only hearing on the subject, held last October, restaurateur Dave Patterson (of Sgt. Pepperoni's Pizza Store in Santa Ana Heights, California) asked Congress to put a statute of limitations on collection of back taxes. Patterson, who had received a $3,000 bill from BATF that month, emphasized to lawmakers that "we work hard, pay our bills and pay our taxes. Small-business people have difficulty coping with such large, unexpected tax bills."

Even the White House has taken a stance. At the October 1989 hearing, Assistant U.S. Treasury Secretary Kenneth Gideon stopped short of supporting amnesty for back taxes but agreed that BATF (a division of the Treasury Department) should waive penalties and interest on these back taxes. Noting that the estimated percentage of retailers complying with the law had risen from 40 percent to 80 percent after BATF took over collections, Gideon said, "Many taxpayers were simply not aware of the tax. There is no evidence that dealers were attempting to avoid the tax."

In his initial fiscal 1991 budget plan, President Bush proposed eliminating the SOT for retailers and making up the difference by increasing tax on distillers and wholesalers. In response to an outcry by alcohol suppliers, the Treasury Department has indicated it would be willing to consider other alternatives for collecting the money while providing relief to small retailers.

## Reform uncertain

The outlook for reform depends in large part on how much pressure Congress feels from constituents on the issue. Reform would likely occur as part of the budget-reconciliation bill now winding its way through Congress.

The National Restaurant Association has joined grocers, wholesalers and distillers in urging the President and Congress to repeal the SOT outright or at least limit BATF to collecting taxes back to January 1, 1988.

If you would like to support reforms of the BATF tax, write your members of Congress at the U.S. House of Representatives, Washington DC 20515 and the U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510.

*—Andrew McLauchlin*

## A hotel chain with an environmental vision

*Ramada International Hotels & Resorts has launched an environmental program where both staff members and guests are the keys to success.*

**Employees of the Ramada Renaissance Hotel-Airport in Atlanta pick up trash along "their" street.**

"We intend to become the hotelier of environmental integrity," says Kathy Redmond, senior vice president of marketing for Ramada. "Both travelers and employees want to be part of a hotel chain that has strong values and a clear vision."

Ramada's new environmental program—known as "Hotels of the New Wave"—is a grassroots effort; the company is counting on its 22,000 employees to make the areas in and around individual properties more environmentally sound.

Each hotel's staff works independently, developing and implementing its own ideas, supported by materials from headquarters.

### Encouraging ideas

Each property forms its own environmental committee to evaluate employee suggestions. Cash incentives are offered to employees who develop the most effective ideas; and at the annual convention in September, chairman's awards are presented for the best idea by region, hotel and employee. Successful ideas are further recognized in Ramada's company newsletter and on bulletin boards. The Ramada in Toronto also publishes the "Green Team News," a bimonthly environmental newsletter, and the Ramada Renaissance Hotel-Techworld in Washington DC is producing its own environmental-education video for employees.

So far the myriad ideas developed by participating properties include installing bike racks, distributing discount metro tickets and offering cash incentives for carpoolers; using biodegradable detergents for hotel laundries and housekeeping; and replacing paper coffee filters with small-screen wire substitutes.

Individual properties have their particular successes as well. Employees at the Ramada Renaissance Hotel-Airport in Atlanta have adopted a street and spend one hour each week picking up trash. In Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, Ramada engineers are studying the feasibility of installing their own compost pile; in the meantime, all usable food products, such as carrot tops and lettuce hearts, are sold to local farmers as livestock feed. The Ramada Renaissance at Ballston Metro Center in Arlington, Virginia, donates one dollar to the Arlington County Department of Parks and Recreation for every bottle of wine served in its restaurant, A Cut Above.

### Including every department

Hotels are encouraged to include every department and every employee. At the Ramada Renaissance Hotel in Long Beach, California, the purchasing department works to evaluate current and future products to ensure maximum recycling ability. Housekeepers monitor thermostats, turn off lights and pre-sort glass, plastic and paper as they empty the trash in guest rooms. The restaurant staff recycles glass and serves water to guests only upon request. The engineering department monitors paper collection and recycling bins and shuts down heavy machinery, such as service elevators and dishwashers, during periods of low hotel activity.

### Getting the word out

Ramada hopes to communicate its successes and concerns to the public as well. The major vehicle for this is an international print advertising campaign, which began in May and is scheduled to run through 1990.

Individual Ramada hotels are also being encouraged to work with local environmental groups to promote common causes.

Ramada is beginning to concentrate on guests as well to generate action beyond the limits of individual properties. In Edmonton, Ramada rooms are already outfitted with small placards next to light switches and appliances, which remind guests to turn them off. Other hotels are developing similar strategies. "We want to highlight our environmental concerns and encourage guests to do their part," says Annette Eckel, director of public relations at the Long Beach Renaissance. "Many guests just leave their hotel rooms with all the lights on, the television going and the air conditioning running."

Several hotels are taking a more practical approach to making guests part of their environmental scheme. Long Beach visitors are called into action to help reduce the use of styrofoam cups by the hotel's Presto Deli, which offers 25 cents off a cup of coffee for guests who supply their own cups. The Ballston Renaissance awards a "Weekend Celebration" package—including two nights at the hotel, a bottle of champagne and breakfast for two—to every private resident of Ballston who plants a tree in the community. This "award" will continue through October.

### Not a one-shot campaign

Ramada realizes the magnitude of environmental issues and that solutions will take many steps and many years. "It takes dedication over the long haul, and that's the kind of commitment Ramada International has made," says Kathy Redmond.

*—Melanie A. Crosby*

## Hurst pledges support to two designated-driver campaigns

"This may be the year of the designated driver—and that would benefit both restaurateurs and their customers," said National Restaurant Association President Michael E. Hurst. He was referring to national designated-driver campaigns launched by two influential organizations.

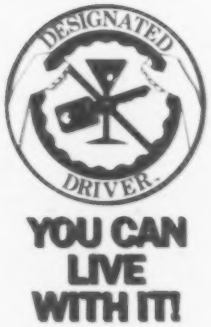
Hurst spoke during a luncheon last month at which Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) announced its campaign. He told a large audience of advocates and politicians, "We would be elated and relieved if designated drivers became a social norm in this country."

### MADD's program

MADD plans to flood the country with posters, table tents, buttons, coasters and napkins that remind people to designate one of their party to refrain from drinking and then drive the group home. These materials have the logo "The Designated Driver—You Can Live With It."

"Designating a driver is a matter of course in Scandinavian countries—a part of normal social behavior," says Sally O'Connor, director of community programs at MADD's national office in Irving, Texas. "Over there no one would even think of driving a car drunk."

MADD's program is a grassroots effort, implemented largely through local chapters across the country or, where no MADD chapters exist, other community groups. "We developed a logo with no




**MADD'S designated-driver poster helps promote the concept.**

mention of MADD so that interested groups could handle the idea their own way and adopt it as their own," says O'Connor.

O'Connor hopes that working with the National Restaurant Association will help get the message to people driving to restaurants and bars. "By displaying a designated-driver poster in their establishments, foodservice operators will be helping to make designating a driver a thing that everyone does automatically," says O'Connor. MADD materials can be ordered directly from local MADD chapters. The MADD designated-driver poster (two-color, 14" by 17," on light paper) is available from the Washington DC office of the National Restaurant Association for $4.00 for four. The nonmember price is $6.50.

### Harvard's program

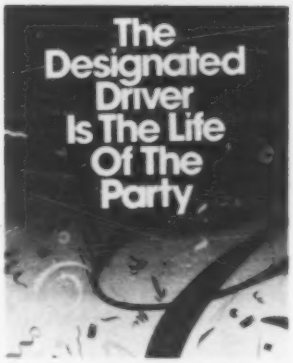
A second major national program, organized by the Harvard Alcohol Project (HAP)—a program of the Center for Health Communication at the Harvard School of Public Health—recently succeeded in bringing an entire community together in support of designated drivers. On Martha's Vineyard this summer, the slogan "The Designated Driver is the Life of the Party" blanketed the small resort town.

The colorful "Life of the Party" poster, filled with eye-catching neon-bright streamers, hung in nearly every restaurant and bar. "Our idea is that you can sell the designated-driver idea just as you can sell a beer," says Dr. Jay Winsten, HAP director. "Life of the Party" posters (four-color, 16" by 20¼," on heavy paper) are also available from the National Restaurant Association for $11.00 for two. The nonmember price is $13.00.

The Martha's Vineyard experiment, however, is simply the latest triumph for a program that has been actively campaigning for the designated-driver concept for several years. Although the Martha's Vineyard effort was structured much like MADD's community-support program, most of the Harvard program is based on a mass-media blitz that includes local radio, television news, and public-service advertising as well as prime-time network television.

"Nothing can rival the impact of prime-time entertainment," says Winsten. "It not only mirrors social reality but also helps shape it by depicting what constitutes popular opinion, by influencing people's perceptions of the roles and behaviors that are appropriate to members of a culture, and by modeling specific behaviors."

More than 80 television episodes—from "Cheers" to "The Young and the Restless"—have made references to the dangers of drinking and driving and the virtue of designating a driver. Several shows, including the popular "Who's the Boss?" and "Growing Pains," have built entire episodes around the subject of drunk driving and its painful consequences.




**HAP's eye-catching "Life of the Party" poster encourages the positive image of the designated driver.**

Like O'Connor, Winsten has seen an overwhelming positive response to HAP's designated-driver program, both from the media and in various community experiments. He also believes that the idea is becoming part of normal behavior and a question of personal responsibility. Recent statistics seem to indicate that use of designated drivers is climbing.

To order posters to display in your restaurant, send a check for the appropriate amount to the publications department at the National Restaurant Association. Be sure to indicate which poster you want.

*—Melanie A. Crosby*

### New edition of "Help Prevent Drunk Driving"

To encourage alcohol awareness among all restaurateurs, the association recently revised the booklet, *Help Prevent Drunk Driving, A Restaurateur's Guide.* It describes the designated-driver concept, lays out some important guidelines and suggests ways that restaurants can publicize the program.

# THE CREATIVE CHEFS NOBODY KNOWS

**by Gary M. Stern**

Just imagine if an actor won an Academy Award and no one heard about it, or if an Olympic gold medalist shunned publicity and chose to perform in obscurity. In publicity-conscious America, we would be stunned. But a certain type of chef has been cooking away from the limelight, yet steadily winning culinary kudos—the private-club chef.

It is no coincidence that of the 23 American chefs named to the 1992 Culinary Team USA—to compete in the IKA/HOGA competition or "Culinary Olympics" in Frankfurt in 1992—seven cook at private clubs. Keith Keogh, team manager for Team USA and executive chef of the Epcot Center in Orlando, Florida, says that "private clubs give a chef more flexibility in terms of creativity." Keogh explains that at private clubs a chef has the freedom to create five innovative dishes a night, while a restaurant's chef may often be limited to one experimental dish in order to conform to the eatery's predefined menu.

## Rapport with customers

The chef's freedom to create, Keogh suggests, stems from trust. Customers trust the chef, and the chef builds up rapport with the clientele. Therefore he can be inspired to stretch his talents nightly.

Cooking for the 2,000 members of the Cherokee Town and Country Club in Atlanta, which combines golf, tennis and swimming facilities with three restaurants, enabled chef Darryl E. Evans, a member of the southeast regional olympic team, to get to know many of his customers. While most restaurant chefs cook for an ever-changing clientele, private-dining-club chefs establish rapport with their customers. "You have to be attentive to their needs, and you have to give them something different and never be stagnant," notes Evans, who has since moved to Azalea in Atlanta.

Private-club chefs can often be seen walking through their dining rooms, eliciting feedback from the clientele. Listening to his customers, Alex Darvishi, executive chef at the Columbus Athletic Club in Columbus, Ohio, and a member of the national olympic team, has curtailed heavy sauces, fatty foods and heavy gravies and has instead moved to light vinaigrette sauces and more legumes (such as lentil ragus) for his nutrition-conscious patrons. Similarly, club members had been telling Darryl Evans and the other Cherokee Town and Country Club chefs that grilled salmon, snapper and dover sole are preferable to sirloin steak and other red meats.

*Gary M. Stern is a freelance writer in New York City.*

Responsiveness to their clientele is one of the hallmarks of being a private-dining chef. For example, Richard Burr, executive chef at the St. Joseph Country Club in St. Joseph, Missouri, and a member of the central regional olympic team, flies in fresh salmon because he knows many of his midwestern diners crave fresh California fish.

"You're expected to have a good relationship with members. If they like you, you're fine. If they don't, you're in trouble," admits one chef. Diners go straight to the food and beverage manager to give feedback on what they like and what they abhor, he says. Restaurants may deal with hundreds of a people a night, but the more select members of a private club are encouraged to ask for alteration of a particular dish. Making these special dishes "encourages the chef to be more versatile," says Jim Singerling, executive vice president of the Club Managers Association of America, which is headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia.

## A cooking challenge

Moreover, chefs at private clubs have a captive audience. "The average person can't come in," explains Michael Russell, executive chef at the Skyline Club in Southfield, Michigan (20 miles from Detroit), and a member of the national culinary team. A typical

city restaurant can draw from a radius of a million people, but a private club usually serves only several hundred members. Cooking for the Skyline Club's 450 members "forces me to constantly develop new ideas, to come up with new food thoughts and presentations that will keep them coming back enthused," says Russell.

"It's a challenge that has made me a better chef by forcing me to expand my mind. It's like a parachute. Unless you open it, it's no good. It's forced me to set trends and be innovative," adds Russell. He is always looking to surprise his diners. For example, he has been roasting vegetables instead of just steaming or sauteeing them. The vegetables, he notes, "start to caramelize, which gives them a different flavor." He also likes to run starches together, taking navy beans, black-eyed peas and pinto beans and binding them together with a demiglace and a really good reduction of stock.

Darvishi explains that as a a private-club chef he has the freedom to experiment. He attends culinary shows and is constantly reading cookbooks and culinary magazines to keep abreast of trends. As long as the food tastes good and looks appealing, his managers and clientele encourage him to experiment. (Even as he was being interviewed for this article, Darvishi was preparing a new dish for the evening's menu, *veal Manhattan*—veal stuffed with lobster tail and spiced with fresh tarragon.) "At a club I can do almost anything. A chef at a restaurant or hotel has to go by a more fixed menu," he says.

## A matter of economics

Singerling attributes the atmosphere of creativity encouraged in private clubs to economics. "Creativity takes more hours of a chef's time. Private clubs, because of dues supplements that they receive from members, do not have the fiscal restraints that exist at tabletop operations," he says.

Jack Braun, president of the American Culinary Federation, which cosponsors the olympic culinary event with the National Restaurant Association, notes that although club chefs operate with constrained budgets, they do not have to deal with strict food-cost percentages, as many restaurant chefs do. Costs can be kept down at meals because membership fees yield considerable income, and many private clubs, he suggests, operate on a nonprofit basis. Too often chefs at retail restaurants concentrate on profit and loss and are restricted to dishes that are safe and that they know will sell, notes Burr.

This doesn't mean the chefs are not cost-conscious. Carl Wendt, executive chef at the St. Francis Yacht Club in San Francisco, says that many private-club chefs face the same budgetary pressures as do other chefs.

## Earning culinary stripes

Why have so many chefs at exclusive clubs earned their olympic-level stripes? Michael Russell says that cooking for a targeted audience hones one's skills. "Clubs tend to be elegant, tend to appeal to CEOs, presidents of companies and business executives. You're cooking for people who are upper-class, who can afford a little bit more and expect more from you." That, he claims, refines a chef's culinary talents. Several chefs mentioned that private-club members travel worldwide and have been exposed to international cuisines.

Most of the chefs interviewed attributed the time off permitted them to try out for the culinary olympics to supportive bosses and general managers; they paid for salaries and expenses while the chef was competing. Russell, for example, was off to Disney World every other weekend for practice sessions through early winter to train for the final olympic tryouts.

Clubs recognize that having their chef named a culinary olympics participant strengthens the club's reputation and motivates the chef. Being selected as a culinary-olympic chef, he says, is an educational experience for the chef. Darryl Evans asserts that being exposed to the most talented cooks in the country influenced his "hot-food cooking skills, presentations and banquets." When Russell returned from the olympic trials, he felt energized and rejuvenated. "I returned with new ideas and fine-tuned skills, and the club can say we have an olympic team member as chef," he says.

Having a chef selected for the culinary olympics, asserts Singerling, "is another star in the crown of a management team that has all the professionals functioning at a high level of excellence."

## Lessons for other chefs

Are there lessons to be learned by table-top operators from the experience of private-club chefs? Michael Russell thinks so. Club chefs "have to keep an ear open to what the customer wants," he says. "I find that sometimes chefs in public places feel that 'if the customer doesn't come back, someone else will.' I can't afford to lose anyone. By listening to customers, they can pick up on new trends and set new trends."

Richard Burr recommends that chefs in public operations become "more attuned to the seasons. Too many chefs get trapped into locked-in menus and don't try to lift up their eyes and see what's out in the market. Customers want what's fresh in the supermarket."

Singerling adds that chefs perform certain tasks at private clubs, such as grand buffets and ice carving, which often are not executed at retail restaurants. This experience helps with food presentation. "We eat with our eyes first," says Aidan Murphy, executive chef at the Polo Club of Boca Raton. Since he began working at the private club, he has come to understand more about how the look of a buffet can make the difference between a diner eating or passing by.

## Not in the public eye

Despite their culinary achievements, most chefs at private clubs often work anonymously—not many people know them, outside of their club members. While other chefs elicit raves from the local and national press, even local restaurant critics will not review meals at a private club, because they are reluctant to review a restaurant from which most of their readers are excluded.

But most chefs are willing to forego the limelight because, as Jim Singerling says, "Clubs allow a chef an opportunity to reach as high a level as he or she can reach. This allows the creative juices to flow." ❑

# CATALAN CUISINE
## NO LONGER UNDER WRAPS

*In 1992 the summer Olympics will be held in Barcelona, Spain, and as a result there is sure to be a surge of interest in all things Catalan, including the food. Smart restaurateurs will take advantage of the heightened interest in Spanish food and wine by including Spanish and/or Catalan dishes on their menu and by planning their own promotions.*

**by Julie Fintel**

There is a part of Spain where the main language isn't even Spanish, where they dance the sardena instead of flamenco, and the culture is more of a reflection of Europe than of the rest of the Iberian peninsula. This is Catalonia, in the northeast corner of Spain. In 1992 the summer Olympics will be held in Barcelona, this province's capital, and as a result, there is sure to be a surge of interest in all things Catalan, including the food.

### The secret cuisine

One of the attractions of Catalan cuisine is that it is still relatively undiscovered. Once discovered, Catalan cuisine promises to delight. Colman Andrews, author of *Catalan Cuisine*, the definitive book on the subject, calls it "Europe's last great culinary secret. Closely related to other Mediterranean cuisines, it is both accessible and exotic, involving the use of well-known ingredients in unexpected combinations—tomatoes, eggplant, garlic, all kinds of game, beans and even pasta," says Andrews.

Many Americans already know about paella, gazpacho and tapas, but very few are familiar with *mar i muntanya* (sea and mountain), for example, the dish that combines chicken and lobster in a sauce with essence of chocolate, or the irresistible *crema Catalana*, the Catalonian version of creme brulee.

Soon the secret will be a secret no more. Besides the summer Olympics in Barcelona, two other major events in Spain in 1992 will thrust Spain and all things Spanish into the spotlight—a world's fair in Seville and the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus.

*Julie Fintel is a communications specialist at the National Restaurant Association.*

## SALMO EN SALSA VERD (Sauteed salmon, clams & cilantro sauce)

*Serves 1*

*Ingredients:*
1 oz. olive oil
½ oz. garlic, finely chopped
½ oz. cilantro, chopped
½ oz. parsley, chopped
1 cup whipping cream
½ lemon
½ cup dry white wine
3 2-oz. salmon medallions or 1 5-oz. filet of salmon
3 cockle clams
1 oz. green peas
3 oz. clam juice

*Method:*
Add olive oil to medium saute pan and heat. Add garlic and lightly brown. Add salmon to pan, sliding the fish around swiftly to prevent sticking. Sear on both sides. Leave skin side down. Add lemon juice and white wine.

Allow the liquid to reduce to bubbles, then add the clam juice. Follow with the parsley and cilantro. Transfer to a glass baking dish. Place in preheated oven (350°F) for 10–15 minutes, or until juice reduces by ¾ of original contents. Once the salmon is fully cooked, return to original saute pan. Add peas and cream and simmer until sauce is formed.

Arrange on plate and pour sauce over fish. Garnish with clams.

*—Courtesy of Marquesa*

## MAR I MUNTANYA (Chicken and Prawn Ragout)

*Serves 4*

*Ingredients:*
1 large chicken (about 3 lbs.), cut into 8 serving pieces
4 Tbs. olive oil
Salt and freshly ground pepper
Dash cinnamon
8–12 large shrimp (in the shell) or a 2-lb. lobster cut into pieces (tail, claws, head, etc.)
2 onions, chopped
2 Tbs. parsley, minced
1 bay leaf
½ tspn. thyme
4 large, ripe tomatoes (peeled, seeded and chopped)
1 cup dry white wine
2 Tbs. brandy
Dash of ground saffron
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 oz. each of ground hazelnuts and ground almonds
2 tspn. grated bitter chocolate

*Method:*
After seasoning the chicken pieces with salt, pepper and a dash of cinnamon, saute them in olive oil in large frying pan until golden brown on both sides. Remove chicken pieces to paper towels to absorb excess oil. In the same pan and oil, saute shrimp until they turn bright red. Remove to paper towels. (If using lobster pieces instead, put them in saucepan of salted water to cover, cover with lid, bring to boil. Then turn down heat to simmer for 30 minutes until lobster is bright red.)

Add lobster or shrimp and chicken to large flameproof casserole. Pour off excess oil from frying pan, saute onion until translucent. Add bay leaf, thyme, 1 Tbs. parsley and tomatoes. Stir and cook until mixture thickens slightly. Add wine and brandy, stir. Simmer until reduced by one-half. Remove bay leaf and add one cup water. Stir and pour sauce over the chicken and shellfish in the casserole. Bring to a simmer, covered, over low heat.

In a blender or food processor combine the garlic, saffron, remaining parsley, nuts and chocolate with 1–2 Tbs. of the cooking liquid from the casserole. Add this mixture to the casserole and stir it in to blend with the cooking liquid. Continue to simmer, covered, until the chicken is tender. To serve, the lobster should be removed from the shell. Divide the chicken and shellfish pieces evenly on 4 plates. Pour the sauce over the meat.

A crisp salad, warm bread and a dry white wine make this delicious dish into a complete meal.

*—Courtesy of Eldorado Petit*

## SARSUELA ("Seafood Operetta")

*Serves 2*

*Ingredients:*
2 Tbs. olive oil
1 Tbs. minced garlic
1 cup diced onions
2 bay leaves
1 tspn. thyme
Pinch of rosemary
4-oz. tuna filet
1 lobster tail
4 clams
4 mussels
4 scallops
2 shrimp
Pinch of crushed red peppers
1 Tbs. lemon juice
2 Tbs. white wine
3 cups tomato sauce
Salt to taste
1 tspn. cilantro
1 Tbs. ground almonds
2 Tbs. grated romano cheese
8 oz. linguini

*Method:*
In olive oil, saute garlic, onions, bay leaves, thyme and rosemary until tender. Add seafood to olive-oil mixture and continue to saute for five minutes. Add lemon, peppers and wine and reduce, then add tomato sauce and simmer for 20–25 minutes. Serve over linguini and garnish with ground almonds, cilantro and cheese.

*—Courtesy of Marquesa*

In addition, Spain's entry into the Common Market has resulted in a push to sell Spanish products in the United States. The Commercial Offices of Spain, sponsored by the Spanish government, have been set up in major U.S. cities to promote Spanish products. They supply information and sponsor tastings, annual culinary weeks, visits from Spanish chefs and exhibits at trade shows.

Another group that will be working to make Americans more aware of the attraction of Spanish food is ADREUSA (Asociacion de Restaurantes Espanoles en USA), an organization of Spanish restaurants in the United States. President Ramon San Martin, owner of Cafe San Martin in New York City, says ADREUSA was formed because the members thought Spanish food was not as well represented in the United States as it could be. In addition to being a support group for each other, the 40 restaurant owners who are members of ADREUSA are talking about staging special activities in connection with the events taking place in Spain in 1992.

As 1992 draws closer, look for even more publicity and many more promotions of Spanish foods and wines. How is the public likely to respond? Quite favorably. According to a recent National Restaurant Association study, nearly half the respondents said they wish more ethnic foods were available at restaurants. Most Americans already have access

**Marquesa, at the Scottsdale Princess Resort, gives customers a taste of Catalonia in its decor as well as in its flavorful cuisine.**

to Chinese, Mexican and Italian foods. The same survey showed that consumers were ready to broaden their horizons by moving on to something different. That something different could be Catalan food.

## Catalan cuisine up close

Although Catalan cooking shares many characteristics with the cooking of the rest of Spain, there are certain features that set it apart. Primarily, Catalan cuisine is Mediterranean in character, which is why, according to Andrews, Americans should take to it instinctively. Ingredients popular in the rest of the Mediterranean area, such as eggplant, onions, green and red peppers, parsley, tomatoes and seafood, are basics in Catalan dishes. "Americans already are familiar with, and like, these ingredients," notes Andrews. "They don't have to learn first before they can appreciate Catalan cuisine. Catalan cuisine already has a point of connection for us."

Like the rest of Spanish food, Catalan cuisine also uses olive oil, olives, nuts and figs; and there's hardly a dish that doesn't contain at least a touch of garlic. But there is also a French influence, understandable

### CREMA CATALANA

*Serves 1*

*Ingredients:*
½ cup caramel ice cream
2 tspn. Aguardiente or Grappa
½ cup raspberries (if available); otherwise, use any fresh berry
1 tspn. powdered sugar

*Method:*
Fill one small souffle cup with the berries, Aguardiente and caramel ice cream. Sprinkle powdered sugar on top. Put one cup under the broiler until sugar is brown and serve in the same dish.

*—Courtesy of Marquesa*

since France is just over the mountains to the north, and some things are reminiscent of Italy—pasta figures prominently in many Catalan dishes.

However, the Catalan region has put its own distinct mark on its style of cuisine. For example, almonds are an ingredient found not only in desserts but also in soups and sauces, where they are ground up for thickening as well as for flavor. Chocolate is another unexpected ingredient in sauces.

Catalans like unusual combinations, like the seafood and poultry in the *mar i muntanya*, which is not just a surf-and-turf with the lobster and chicken served by side by side, but a dish where the seafood and chicken are cooked together to make a kind of ragout. Meat and fruit are combined, too, as in baby goose or duck with pears, or pork with prunes, or chicken with figs.

It is the new way of using a lot of familiar ingredients that appeals to people acquainted with other Mediterranean cuisines, says Andrews. "Catalan food uses the same ingredients that are used in Italy and the south of France, but it puts them together in unfamiliar ways. It's like hearing a new interpretation of one of your favorite records," he says.

"Catalan cooking ties everything together—Spanish, French, Portuguese," says Philipe La Mancusa, executive chef at Avenue Grill in Mill Valley, California. "It's kind of Middle Eastern, but it's not Middle Eastern. It's kind of Mediterranean, but it's not Mediterranean. It's almost spicy, but it's not."

La Mancusa chose Catalan dishes as the cuisine for one of his restaurant's theme nights after reading Andrews's book, which was published in 1988. Although Catalan cooking represented a blank spot in his culinary knowledge, he is now enthusiastic about it, and so are the customers—although he admits his dishes aren't 100 percent authentic. His method is to use local products prepared in the Catalan style. For example, La Mancusa has prepared a grilled swordfish with roast garlic, olive oil and parsley, even though swordfish is not one of the fish used by Catalans.

## Discovering Catalan food in the United States

Catalan restaurants are still few and far between in the United States, but at least two new ones—Eldorado Petit and Paradis Barcelona—have been opened in the past year in New York City by Catalans who have been operating successful restaurants in Barcelona and on Catalonia's Costa Brava for many years. Their owners, Lluis and Marc Cnianyas of Eldorado Petit and Armando Bejar of Paradis Barcelona, travel back and forth between New York and Barcelona to oversee operation of the restaurants. At Paradis Barcelona employees go back and forth, too—the restaurant runs an exchange program for its approximately 50 employees, sending them to work in the Barcelona restaurant so they can learn firsthand about Catalonia and its food.

Francisco Rodriguez, who received his early training in Catalan cooking in a five-star hotel on the Costa Brava, the resort area on the Mediterranean, now is teaching his customers about Catalan dishes at his restaurant, Cervantes, in Dumfries, Virginia. To ensure that patrons try the unfamiliar dishes, Rodriguez has a long list of Catalan specials that changes every day, and he has trained his staff to explain the dishes so that customers will be inspired to try them. "Once they try them, they like them," he says.

Marquesa, the fine-dining room of Arizona's Scottsdale Princess Resort, originally served continental food, but it switched to Catalan food two years ago. Keeley Ast, director of public relations, says the restaurant was looking for something different; and after reading Andrews's book, the staff thought Catalan food might be a good choice "because it is unique, flavorful and lends itself to beautiful presentations." "It took off immediately," she adds. Now the restaurant even incorporates Catalan dishes into its successful Sunday brunch on the terrace.

### Five Catalan sauces

Sauces are the foundations of Catalan cuisine, writes Andrews, but he is quick to add that they "aren't really sauces in the conventional French or Italian sense." An American chef who masters any or all of these "sauces" can use them in authentic Catalan dishes or to lend a different twist to traditional American dishes.

There are four principal Catalan sauces: *allioli, sofregit, picada* and *samfainia. Allioli* is an emulsion of garlic and olive oil and sometimes eggs. It is used to liven up meats, fowl, grilled fish, stews and some rice and pasta sauces, but it is primarily a condiment. Some restaurants place a dish of allioli on every table to dribble onto bread.

*Picada*, called the Catalan "roux" by Andrews, is a dense paste made of garlic, fried bread, parsley, ground toasted almonds or hazelnuts and olive oil. Other ingredients, such as chocolate, saffron and parsley, are often added, too. The tiny bit of chocolate adds tartness to the sauce, not a

For full-service restaurants, maintaining a high level of value perception is becoming the "acid test" of the 1990s. The full-service segment is not only more competitive than ever before, but the trend towards "casualization" is also rapidly becoming a standard among fine-dining establishments across the country. Menus are being downscaled and simplified to provide a lower average check, while still offering the guest an enjoyable dining experience in a more casual and relaxed atmosphere.

Menu differentiation is critical, too. It can take a variety of forms, but the key is still delivering high-quality food products made from the freshest possible raw ingredients served in as pure and unspoiled a state as possible. Preparation of menu items from scratch "to order" is a major advantage when servers are introducing both core menu items and daily specials to guests.

However, most kitchen managers and chefs manage their food-product inventory and menu items so as to have plenty of each selection always on hand. Their perception is that

*Bill Main is co-owner of the Shore Bird restaurant in Half Moon Bay, California, a foodservice industry consultant and an instructor for the Educational Foundation of the National Restaurant Association.*

cloying sweetness. The picada is usually stirred into the pot five or 10 minutes before the dish is finished.

*Sofregit* mixes long-cooked onions with tomatoes, garlic and herbs. It is traditionally the first thing that goes into the pot for almost every sauced or stewed dish. Sofregit and picada are almost always used in tandem.

*Samfaina*, similar to ratatouille, combines tomatoes, eggplant and onions simmered in oil. Samfaina is used either as a sauce by pureeing or as a vegetable dish.

A fifth sauce, *Romesco*, is identified with the city of Tarragona, 60 miles down the coast from Barcelona. Its basic ingredients are pulverized almonds and hazelnuts, dried sweet peppers and tomatoes. Romesco is used to enhance fish dishes, as a sauce for green onions, or as a salad dressing.

### Catalonia—land of seafood

It would be hard to have a Catalan meal without including at least one seafood dish. Perhaps the most popular Catalan seafood dish of all is *zarzuela mariscos* (sarsuela in Catalan), a casserole of fish and shellfish, literally translated as "light operetta of seafood." Spanish restaurants of all kinds usually offer it, finding it to be almost as popular as paella. (See recipe.)

Each region of Spain has its own stew, and Catalonia is no exception. Called *suquet*, Catalan's stew features seafood as its main ingredient. At Eldorado Petit, a Catalan restaurant in New York City, the suquet uses cod, monkfish or grouper, shrimp and prawns, embellished with onions, potatoes and tomatoes—all thickened with a picada sauce.

### The controversial bacalao

When writing about seafood in Spain some mention must be made of

VIEWPOINT

# ALWAYS "SELL OUT" NEVER "RUN OUT"

*The goal should always be to minimize the handling, wrapping and preservation of any menu item from one day to the next to insure that the highest possible standards of quality are maintained.*

**by Bill Main**

when a guest is ordering a particular menu selection, the restaurant should never be "out" of that item.

This longstanding kitchen-management mindset is deeply ingrained. But it can be counterproductive. When prepped items are not sold and have to be carried over until the next day, quality suffers and waste occurs, leading ultimately to higher food costs.

It is my strong belief that menus should be engineered so that items are designed to automatically "sell out." If historical data suggest that 25 orders of an item are likely to be sold, I recommend prepping 20 orders. In this way, lower food inventories can be established, and the items sold will always be fresh and of the highest possible quality. The goal should always be to minimize the handling, wrapping and preservation of any menu item from one day to the next to insure that the highest possible standards of quality are maintained.

This practice of "selling out" is especially important with daily specials, which over time can become signature items. There is no better method of stimulating word-of-mouth advertising than to become famous and well known, for example, for the "best Buffalo Wings in town." Indeed, a restaurant's professional image and market identity can virtually be built around these unique signature items.

Guests will assume that extra care and effort will be given to the preparation of these menu items and that they will be fresh, interesting and of superior quality. That is why these items should never carry over.

To be effective, however, the practice of "selling out" must be *carefully* explained to servers in the context of a restaurant's commitment to quality and freshness. If a restaurant does sell out of an item, servers must be taught to tell the guest that items have been "sold out"—*never* that the kitchen has "run out." The phrases have much different connotations in the minds of guests. When a restaurant "sells out" of an item, this suggests popularity and quality, and guests more readily make an alternative selection. However, if guests are told that the restaurant has simply "run out" of an item, they tend to believe that the kitchen is disorganized and irresponsible, and this creates a negative image. It is easy for a server to explain the policy of only preparing menu items to be sold during each shift as a way to *enhance and protect* the restaurant's absolute dedication to delivering only the freshest and highest-quality food products.

It is not easy to train servers to adopt this approach. Habitually, we all explain the lack of availability of a menu item or daily special by saying we have "run out." Therefore, managers and servers alike must concentrate on constantly repeating the "sold out" philosophy. However, in the final analysis, I know of few better ways of reinforcing a restaurant's commitment to service, value, quality and freshness. ❑

*bacalao* (bacalla in Catalan) or dried salted cod. Catalan restaurateurs in the United States say Americans are usually afraid to order bacalao, picturing it as something dry, salty and strongly fishy. Just the opposite is true.

How it's tempered, or desalted, is the key. The cod is soaked and rinsed until it loses its salt flavor and becomes light and delicate—something of a gastronomic marvel, according to Andrews. Josie Prado, owner of La Masia, a Spanish restaurant in West Hollywood, California, lets reluctant customers sample a small taste of the bacalao. She says they end up loving it, especially when it is served on a bed of fresh tomato sauce and topped with fresh mayonnaise laced with garlic. At Eldorado Petit, bacalao is served in a salad with white beans, coriander and lamb's lettuce. Manager John Baran believes that customers who like sushi are sure to like bacalao.

### More Catalan dishes

"Catalan cuisine is essentially natural, and it is easy," writes Andrews. One of the simplest of Catalan foods, but one of the most memorable, is *pa amb tomaquet*, grilled country bread rubbed with tomatoes, olive oil and garlic and topped with anchovies or ham. Sometimes diners are served a plate with chunks of bread, tomato and garlic cloves so they can make their own pa amb tomaquet.

Drawing on the bounty of produce available in Catalonia is the popular dish *escalivada*, which translates from Catalan to "an arrangement of vegetables that have been cooked in ashes (or on a wood-burning grill)." The eggplant, peppers and onions, with their slight smoky flavor, are served as an appetizer or an accompaniment to a main dish. Another popular dish is *esqueixada*, a salad made with raw, marinated fish, something like ceviche.

Elsewhere in Spain flan is the dessert of choice, but in Catalonia it's *crema Catalana*, a custard cooked on top of the stove, allowed to set and then coated with caramelized sugar. An ice-cream version has chunks of the caramelized sugar mixed into the frozen custard.

## Cavas sparkle

Many Americans are still unfamiliar with the name *cava*, as applied to Spanish sparkling wines. That's understandable, since the term, which means "cave" or "cellar," has only been used since 1986 as the official name for the Spanish wines made by the *methode champenoise*. Along with the new name came new guidelines to ensure that the wines were only of the highest quality. Today, if you wish, you may still refer to cavas as Spanish champagne, but in 1994 the name champagne will only be allowed for use on bottles of champagne from the French province of that name.

Cavas are not meant to be a copy of French champagne or a substitute. Even though the method of making the wine is the same, the different variety of grapes used gives the Spanish cavas their own distinct taste. Wine experts have described cavas as fresh, fruity and elegant.

As Spain enters the European Economic Community and steps up her exports to the world, cavas are rapidly growing in popularity. The latest figures show an annual production of 120 million bottles of cava, compared to 200 million bottles of champagne produced in France. That number is expected to increase rapidly.

Almost all cavas (95 percent) come from Catalonia, especially the Penedes region south of Barcelona. There are two major wineries that export cavas to the United States, Freixenet and Codorniu. Freixenet's best known cava is Cordon Negro Brut. Codorniu's Non Plus Ultra has been the top-selling cava in Spain for many years, but recently the winery has begun producing cavas with chardonnay in the blend. Anna de Codorniu Bruit Reserva has a 15 percent mix of chardonnay, while Raimal Blanco de Blancs is 85 percent chardonnay.

When shopping for cavas, look for the four-pointed star on the cork. It distinguishes the cavas from Spanish sparkling wines of a lesser quality.

### Promoting Catalan food

As interest in the 1992 summer Olympics heats up, savvy restaurateurs are sure to plan some promotions around Catalan specialties.

At Chez Panisse, Berkeley, California, the annual Bastille Day garlic dinner featured all Catalan dishes this summer. Owner/chef Alice Waters reports her customers loved everything; but a Catalan pasta dish with small noodles browned in oil and then prepared like a risotto in a rich fish stock was such a hit that she plans to do untold variations on it in the future. On her menu for that evening, Waters also included a scallion dish with Romesco sauce (to which she added onions and leeks) and a salt-cod salad.

Last March, Victoria Rogers, commercial director of the year-old Paradis Barcelona in New York City, staged "It's a wild, wild mushroom festival." From Barcelona she brought several varieties of wild mushrooms not found in the United States, along with an expert to explain them and three guest chefs to prepare 30 dishes using the mushrooms. She put the mushrooms in jars and labeled them with their scientific names and pictures. She then put the jars on a display table for customers to examine.

Because of the success of the mushroom festival, Rogers is now planning a rice festival that will feature 30 kinds of rice dishes, including the original paella, which has cod as its principal ingredient.

With tapas more popular than ever, a wine tasting with tapas is a another natural promotion. For a spring and summer "tapas and cavas" festival, Paradis Barcelona had on hand more than 40 tapas for customers to nibble on while sampling *cavas* (Spanish sparkling wines—see sidebar). The Penedes region in Catalonia is one of the major wine-producing areas of Spain, so it would be easy to limit wine choices to Catalan varieties.

One can take the wine tasting a step further and turn it into a wine dinner, with Catalan dishes and wines as the theme (for more ideas, see article in June/July 1990 ***Restaurants USA*** on special events). For help in planning wine tastings or wine dinners, contact the offices of Foods from Spain, 405 Lexington Avenue, 44th floor, New York, New York 10174—(212) 661-2787; or Wines from Spain, at the same address—(212) 661-4814.

### Telling the secret

1992 is a short two years away. Begin now to let your customers in on the secret of Catalan cuisine. It's a secret worth knowing and sharing. ❑

by Martin D. Mick

# IMPROVING FOOD COST WITH THE KEY-ITEM REPORT

In an age of growing pressure on restaurant profit margins, it has never been more important, or more difficult, to keep a tight rein on food cost. Market saturation, a sluggish economy, mounting government regulation and overall higher operating expenses have intensified the urgency for foodservice operations to keep costs as low as possible.

As we all know, restaurant managers are beset daily with myriad demands and distractions and have precious little time to react. Because managers are pulled in a dozen directions at once, they must find ways to get to the *core* of problems quickly. Yet, it is often said that people spend 80 percent of their time worrying about 20 percent of a problem. It is time to turn that 80/20 rule on its head and spend 20 percent of the time (or less) dealing with 80 percent of the problem.

The Key-Item Report addresses these concerns. It is one successful method for making rapid improvements in perhaps the most elusive of restaurant controls—food costs—and then maintaining acceptable usage levels on a weekly basis, all with a minimum of time and paperwork.

The principle is quite simple—worry most about those items that are high in usage or high in cost. An analysis of food costs usually reveals that a large proportion of food dollars is expended for a relatively small number of items. Here is where 80 percent of the food-cost problem will be found. By identifying those "key" items and tracking their use, it becomes possible to establish trends. In a well-running restaurant, usage will be remarkably consistent over time. Usage outside an acceptable variance is warning of potential trouble. Since the Key-Item Report is compiled on a weekly—rather than monthly—basis, rapid corrections are possible.

*Martin D. Mick is president of Martin Mick Associates, Inc., a marketing and management consulting company in Madison, New Jersey, which provides a variety of management, accounting and information system services to the restaurant and foodservice industry.*

## Choosing key items

Careful thought should be given to what items are to be tracked. In general, the fewer the items, the better. A dozen items is probably the upper limit of what a manager can effectively deal with at one time. Of course, once satisfactory results have been obtained for a period of time, one can always choose to change some (or all) of the key items. The first and main point is to keep the process simple.

Second, items should be chosen that are used in the same way consistently and that represent a "constant" on the menu. Ingredients used in specials are not good choices for key items, because, by their very nature, specials change all the time. Thus it would be impossible to get meaningful information on usage.

Third, items that appear as ingredients in a number of different menu offerings should be avoided. For example, olive oil, although certainly high in cost, may be a poor choice for tracking because the restaurant uses it in too many different ways. Since some olive oil may be stored in prepped form in a number of dressings or in cruets on each table and some may be held in bulk in the storeroom, it may be too difficult to determine how much olive oil is actually on hand.

Key items need not be restricted to food. The same method can be applied to liquor, paper goods or any other item used by an operation. In all cases the analysis should be as

**Figure 1**

## Key-Item Inventory And Purchase Record

Date of beginning inventory: _____
Taken by: _____

| | Item 1 | Item 2 | Item 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Beginning inventory | | | |
| Purchases: | | | |
| Sun | | | |
| Mon | | | |
| Tue | | | |
| Wed | | | |
| Thu | | | |
| Fri | | | |
| Sat | | | |
| – Ending inventory | | | |
| = Usage | | | |

Date of ending inventory: _____
Taken by: _____

**Note:** *Be certain inventories and purchases are expressed in the same units.*

specific to usage as possible. For example, liquor usage should be computed by using liquor sales, glassware to total (food and liquor) sales, etc.

### Computing weekly usage

The old computer expression "garbage in—garbage out" is very appropriate here. Without accurate information, the Key-Item Report will be useless. Figure 1 illustrates a sample inventory tracking form that is easy to use. At the beginning of the week, an inventory is taken. This must be a count of the same item wherever and in whatever form it is present and unsold in the restaurant. It may be in bulk in a storeroom or freezer, on the serving line in the kitchen, work in progress, finished prep or out in the dining room.

During the week, delivery of key items is noted in the space provided in each column.

At the end of the week a second inventory is taken. This ending inventory is subtracted from the sum of new purchases plus the beginning inventory. The figure derived is the amount of an item used during the week. This figure may be expressed in dollars, as a percentage of total sales, or in units of an item used. My preference is the latter choice, because it is more easily understood by employees. It is far more meaningful to advise a cook that his or her usage of steak increased 150 pounds over the previous week than to say usage was up 9 percent—because pounds is the format used every day.

### Weekly comparisons

Because business volumes are not constant, an operation needs a method for smoothing out fluctuations in sales, so that valid weekly comparisons can be made. In the illustration above, what we do not know is whether weekly food sales also increased 9 percent, thereby probably explaining the increase in steak used.

My approach has been to break usage down into units used per $1,000 of food sales. This provides a number that evens out sales fluctuations. (The formula for obtaining this number is usage times 1,000 divided by food sales.) Furthermore, it is a value that measures usage on a more incremental level. Therefore it becomes easier for a manager to monitor usage and react to changes. With this new information, the manager can then revisit the worried cook and examine numbers that will tell whether steak usage did, in fact, increase over the previous week. And if so, he or she can then determine how many pounds per $1,000 of food sales the increase represented.

### Analyzing the data

As shown in Figure 2, the usage figures derived show a clear trend that allows for weekly comparisons (see sidebar for a discussion of the data). A period of four to six weeks may be required before a pattern emerges. If the numbers remain erratic, fluctuating wildly from week to week, several problems need to be considered—poor data (inventory, purchase records), pilferage or very lax controls in foodhandling procedures.

The first task is to establish consistency in the numbers. That process in and of itself will improve food cost. Once the numbers are consistent, then management can begin efforts to reduce usage. More often than not the fluctuation is a training/personnel

## Looking at real numbers: five examples

Figure 2 illustrates actual data accumulated on a breakfast/lunch operation. Key items chosen reflect those in heavy use. Usage is expressed in units per $1,000 of food sales. The unit of an item is displayed in the column "InvPack." Hence, cheese usage is listed in pounds, eggs are by the dozen and fresh juice is by the gallon.

Coffee, which represents 15 percent of sales, was found to be heavily wasted. After this item was monitored for eight weeks, usage dropped 45 percent, primarily through more careful preparation. Coffee grinders and brewing equipment were recalibrated to accurately dispense the proper portions. In addition, we discovered that the staff was pouring out large amounts of coffee at the end of each shift. By paying more careful attention to when a new pot needed to be brewed, thousands of lost dollars are now being saved.

Fresh juice had a less dramatic solution. Because it was discovered that fresh juice was a favorite with employ-

issue. It is crucial to ensure that recipes and portion guidelines are adhered to and that waste is reduced with a vengeance.

After sufficient data have been accumulated, it becomes possible to establish targeted goals for usage. Variance from the goal indicates the need for further attention. (It must be emphasized that initially no one will know what an acceptable usage goal for a particular item in the restaurant should be. Every restaurant is different. Time and investigation will lead the manager to a solution.)

It is important to remember that the Key-Item Report suggests the *possibility* of problems. It should be thought of as a tickler system that highlights the need to ask questions. In some cases there may be a valid reason why usage of a particular item jumped.

In multi-unit operations, comparison between restaurants can be made, provided the sales mix and reporting format is similar.

**Figure 2**
**Key-Item Report**

| It# | Item | W/E date | InvPack | Usage | Food sales | Usage per $1000 food sales |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 78 | Cheese, Jarlsburg | | | | | |
| | | 3/11/90 | 1# | 30.3 | $22,469. | 1.35 |
| | | 3/18/90 | 1# | 28.8 | 23,515. | 1.22 |
| | | 3/25/90 | 1# | 28.9 | 24,215. | 1.19 |
| | | 4/08/90 | 1# | 28.3 | 26,011. | 1.09 |
| | | 4/15/90 | 1# | 25.5 | 25,250. | 1.01 |
| | | 4/22/90 | 1# | 83.0 | 25,921. | 3.20 |
| | | 4/29/90 | 1# | 73.3 | 27,784. | 2.64 |
| | | 5/06/90 | 1# | 28.5 | 24,370. | 1.17 |
| 931 | Coffee—reg and decaf | | | | | |
| | | 3/11/90 | 1# | 198.5 | 22,469. | 8.83 |
| | | 3/18/90 | 1# | 185.5 | 23,515. | 7.89 |
| | | 3/25/90 | 1# | 177.0 | 24,215. | 7.31 |
| | | 4/08/90 | 1# | 148.5 | 26,011. | 5.71 |
| | | 4/15/90 | 1# | 136.0 | 25,250. | 5.39 |
| | | 4/22/90 | 1# | 145.0 | 25,921. | 5.59 |
| | | 4/29/90 | 1# | 127.0 | 27,784. | 4.57 |
| | | 5/06/90 | 1# | 118.0 | 24,370. | 4.84 |
| 81 | Eggs, large grade A | | | | | |
| | | 3/11/90 | 1/dz | 276.0 | 22,469. | 12.28 |
| | | 3/18/90 | 1/dz | 230.0 | 23,515. | 9.78 |
| | | 3/25/90 | 1/dz | 214.0 | 24,215. | 8.84 |
| | | 4/08/90 | 1/dz | 270.0 | 26,011. | 10.38 |
| | | 4/15/90 | 1/dz | 197.0 | 25,250. | 7.80 |
| | | 4/22/90 | 1/dz | 210.0 | 25,921. | 8.10 |
| | | 4/29/90 | 1/dz | 255.0 | 27,784. | 9.18 |
| | | 5/06/90 | 1/dz | 210.0 | 24,370. | 8.62 |
| 933 | Juice, fresh—orange, grapefruit | | | | | |
| | | 3/11/90 | 1/gal | 53.0 | 22,469. | 2.36 |
| | | 3/18/90 | 1/gal | 56.0 | 23,515. | 2.38 |
| | | 3/25/90 | 1/gal | 52.0 | 24,215. | 2.15 |
| | | 4/08/90 | 1/gal | 44.0 | 26,011. | 1.69 |
| | | 4/15/90 | 1/gal | 56.0 | 25,250. | 2.22 |
| | | 4/22/90 | 1/gal | 46.0 | 25,921. | 1.77 |
| | | 4/29/90 | 1/gal | 49.0 | 27,784. | 1.76 |
| | | 5/06/90 | 1/gal | 44.0 | 24,370. | 1.81 |
| 16 | Turkey breast, unit of measure/price | | | | | |
| | | 3/11/90 | 1# | 27.7 | 22,469. | 1.23 |
| | | 3/18/90 | 1# | 24.3 | 23,515. | 1.03 |
| | | 3/25/90 | 1# | 24.9 | 24,215. | 1.03 |
| | | 4/08/90 | 1# | 27.8 | 26,011. | 1.07 |
| | | 4/15/90 | 1# | 31.5 | 25,250. | 1.25 |
| | | 4/22/90 | 1# | 53.7 | 25,921. | 2.07 |
| | | 4/29/90 | 1# | 49.6 | 27,784. | 1.79 |
| | | 5/06/90 | 1# | 33.4 | 24,370. | 1.37 |

ees, employees were encouraged to cut back their consumption. Since the change was implemented, consumption has remained flat at about 1.8 gallons per $1,000 of food sales. The manager is satisfied with this level of usage.

The use of eggs was erratic. The manager learned that omelets, a big seller, vary widely in size depending upon who is cooking. Retraining was required to correct this problem. The large jump of 4/8/90, however, remained unexplained, suggesting possible waste, poor inventory or pilferage.

Jarlsberg cheese and turkey were consistent in their usage, including the jump for the two weeks ending 4/22 and 4/29. In investigating the cause for the increase, the manager realized his usual sandwich man was on vacation. The fill-in cook was apparently very generous and/or wasteful in his preparation.

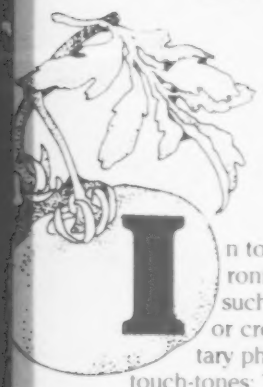
Generally staff has been responsive in helping to control usage. The kitchen seems to need attention, with retraining on portion control high on the list.

Because the usage numbers are not erratic, they suggest proper recordkeeping and an absence of key-item theft.

## Summation

To be successful at controlling food costs requires the support and participation of *everyone* involved in the handling, preparation and serving of food. It may require breaking old habits and can call for significant retraining. It will definitely require constant monitoring. As with any human process, the manager cannot assume that once taught, the system will maintain itself. ❑

# THE CHUTNEY



In today's health-driven environment, traditional sauces, such as a delicate hollandaise or creamy alfredo, are like rotary phones in an office of touch-tones: They served another generation well, but now they seem anachronistic and unappealing.

Chutney, a sweet-and-sour, vinegar-based condiment, has emerged as one of the pillars of the adventurous, post-mother sauce era. Made from a variety of seasonal fruit and vegetables, it is popular with customers. For the guest with the discerning palate, chutney offers a kaleidoscope of complex flavors—from mildly sweet and fruity to fiery and tart. For the health-conscious customer, it has no cholesterol or oil and negligible salt. And for the chef, it is as easy to prepare as soup, can be made days ahead and can be refrigerated for several weeks.

### A serendipitous encounter

I first learned about the vast potential of chutney at a swank Boston cafe where I was briefly employed as a manager. Through a trendy haze of purple eggplant and wilting radicchio emerged a genuinely rewarding dish: a chicken-breast sandwich topped with Major Grey's chutney. The customers raved about this intriguing combination.

Years later I recreated the dish at my own restaurant; but unable to locate any Major Grey's —that sweet, generic chutney made from mangoes—I cautiously brewed my first batch of homemade chutney. The result was sublimely inspiring. It was a fragrant blend of fruit, onions and vinegar, accented with ginger, garlic, curry seasonings and hot spices. The savory condiment imparted varying degrees of sweetness, tartness and spiciness. I had crossed a new epicurean frontier, and the borders were unlimited.

I soon discovered a wide array of ingredients that yielded wonderful chutneys: apples, pears, peaches, tomatoes, pineapples, cranberries, rhubarb and many other fruits and vegetables. And my enthusiasm was fueled the more by the overwhelming positive responses of restaurant customers, some of whom offered to buy the chutney to take home.

Chutneys are suprisingly easy to make. All of the ingredients, except the ginger and garlic, are coarsely chopped and combined with vinegar and seasonings and then simmered. (The ginger and garlic are minced and then added.) After about an hour, the condiment cooks to a chunky, jam-like consistency and is transformed into a thick, colorful potion with a rich fragrance. It is also easy to make the chutney hotter, sweeter or more tart by adjusting the amount of vinegar, sugar, hot seasonings or fruit.

### Myriad applications

I soon began incorporating chutney into my menu. A grilled-chicken-teriyaki sandwich topped with pineapple chutney became my restaurant's most popular lunch item, and I offered chutney as a topping for hamburgers, grilled pork loin, and ham specials. Tomato-and-apple chutney added zest and spice to steamed vegetables. For a refreshing curried salad with pasta, chicken, tuna or shrimp, I added chutney to the basic recipe. For an easy and exotic side dish with baked sweet potatoes, new potatoes or winter squash, I served my version of mango chutney (spicier than and not as sweet as the commercial brand) in place of sour cream or butter.

Chutneys complement roast turkey, lamb, chicken and Cornish game hens. They can be served in place of jams with scones or muffins. Chutneys can be added to curry dishes, soups, salad dressings and omelets, or served in place of mayonnaise with roast beef, turkey, ham or cheese

*I have met the future, and*

### CHICKEN INDIENNE W

*Se*

*Ingredients:*
2 Tbs. butter
1½ lbs. skinless and boneless chicken breasts, diced
1½ cups fresh pineapple, diced
1 medium onion, diced
2 Tbs. dry white wine
1 Tbs. curry powder
2 tspn. ground cumin
⅛ tspn. black pepper
⅛ tspn. cayenne pepper
2 cups cranberry chutney
2 cups banana raita or plain yogurt (optional)

### MANGO CHUTNEY

*Yields 3 cups*

*Ingredients:*
2 mangoes, peeled, pitted and chopped
¾ cup diced onion
1 apple or pear, diced
½ cup brown sugar
1 cup red wine vinegar
1 fresh red chili pepper, seeded and minced
1½ Tbs. minced fresh ginger root
4 to 6 garlic cloves, minced
¼ tspn. salt
⅛ tspn. cayenne pepper
⅛ tspn. ground cloves

*Method:*
Combine all ingredients in a nonreactive saucepan and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally. Simmer for 30 to 40 minutes, until mixture has a chunky, jam-like consistency.

Allow the chutney to cool to room temperature, and then refrigerate. If refrigerated, the chutney should keep for 2 to 3 weeks.

by Jay Solomon

# INTRIGUE

*hutney is featured on the menu.*

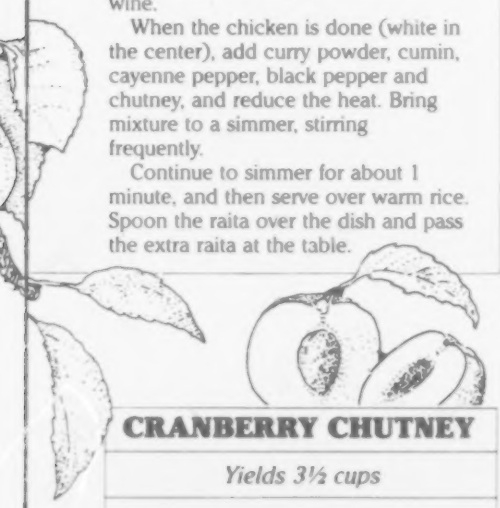
**T CRANBERRY CHUTNEY**

*ves to 4*

*Method:*
Melt butter in a saute pan. Add the chicken and saute over high heat. After 2 to 3 minutes, reduce the heat to medium; add the pineapple, onion and wine.

When the chicken is done (white in the center), add curry powder, cumin, cayenne pepper, black pepper and chutney, and reduce the heat. Bring mixture to a simmer, stirring frequently.

Continue to simmer for about 1 minute, and then serve over warm rice. Spoon the raita over the dish and pass the extra raita at the table.



**CRANBERRY CHUTNEY**

*Yields 3½ cups*

*Ingredients:*
12 oz. fresh or frozen cranberries
1 large apple, diced (do not peel)
1 pear, diced (do not peel)
1 medium onion, diced
8 to 10 garlic cloves, minced
2 Tbs. minced fresh ginger root
¾ cup brown sugar
½ cup raisins
2¼ cups red wine vinegar
½ tspn. salt (optional)

*Method:*
Combine all of the ingredients in a nonreactive saucepan and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally. Simmer for 20 to 30 minutes until the mixture has a jam-like consistency.

Allow the chutney to cool to room temperature; refrigerate. If refrigerated, it should keep for 3 to 4 weeks.

sandwiches . Chutney can also be used as a bold, tangy sauce. Chicken Indienne is a succulent dish I make with cranberry chutney; it consistently wins praise from my restaurant patrons. (See recipe.)

The versatility of chutney makes it an ideal ingredient for lunch and dinner specials. Although cranberry-apple chutney is featured on my regular menu, I offer seasonal chutneys, as specials: In June, I use rhubarb, plums and apricots; in September, tomatoes, apples and pears; in November, cranberries and pineapples. For a fiery chutney, I add red chili peppers or jalapeno peppers and hot seasonings; for a sweet chutney, I add dried apricots, dates or raisins. I feature daily chutneys on the chalkboard the way other restaurants feature soups or side dishes.

There are times throughout the year, of course, when fresh produce for a chutney is not available. To ensure that I'll have ingredients for a chutney year-round, I stockpile about 50 pounds of cranberries in the freezer in November, when cranberries are inexpensive and widely available. Cranberries are one of the few fruits or vegetables that fully maintain their fresh flavor and texture after they've been frozen and thawed. This enables me to keep a cranberry chutney throughout the year.

Although canning is traditionally the way to preserve chutney, most chutneys can be refrigerated for two to three weeks without losing their potency. I make a large batch of chutney and keep it well chilled. When I am ready to assemble a dish, I ladle the chutney straight from the chilled container.

## A three-step introduction

Adding chutney to the menu involves three steps. First, the chef must make the chutney and discover, as I did, the deep, penetrating flavors and textures of the condiment and the complex balance of fruit, vinegar, ginger, garlic and seasonings.

The second step is to introduce the waitstaff to the condiment. Tasting the chutney is the best way for service personnel to understand it. Since most servers (and guests) are only slightly familiar with chutney, the dish must be marketed with the same savvy and mouth-watering descriptions as wines and desserts. For example, this is how Chicken Indienne is described on the menu: "Strips of chicken breast are sauteed with fresh pineapple, onion and cranberry chutney, and seasoned with a flurry of curry. (Cranberry chutney is a sweet-and-tart condiment consisting of vinegar, fresh fruit and ginger.) It is a delectable, highly seasoned and extremely healthy dish."

The third step, after the chef has made the chutney and the chutney is properly marketed, is preparing the menu item once the dish is ordered.

## A fitting accompaniment

As the popularity of the chutney-based dishes grew at my restaurant, I began offering a side dish known as raita. It is a soothing yogurt condiment, and like chutney, rooted in Indian cuisine. Customers spoon the raita over the dish, much as sour cream is spooned over Mexican dishes. Keeping within the revisionist cooking style, I offer a banana-cucumber raita, which calms down the spicier chutneys.

Highly acidic or pungent wines, such as a California sauvignon blanc or New York seyval, are the best wines to accompany a meal such as Chicken Indienne. As with other spicy or curried dishes, a cold beer is also a pleasant companion. ⌟

*Jay Solomon is the author of* Condiments' Chutney, Relishes, and Table Sauces, *which will be published by the Crossing Press in September. He is also the chef owner of Jay's Clinton Hall Cafe in Ithaca, New York.*

# THE LITMUS TEST FOR HIRING A CHEF

*A great chef brings customers to your door, delicious food to the table and happiness to your life. A temperamental chef, on the other hand, makes kitchen workers uptight, puts too much spice in the bearnaise sauce and insults customers who complain. Consequently, the decisions you make while searching for a chef can have long-term implications for your restaurant's reputation and staff morale. By using intuitive skills, a restaurateur can eliminate bad-apple candidates.*

**by Paul Moomaw**

Marcel Desaulniers, co-owner and executive chef at The Trellis in Williamsburg, Virginia, hasn't made many hiring mistakes. But there is one he can't forget. He had just finished interviewing a young culinary-school graduate and was walking him through the restaurant, when the candidate sent out a troubling signal. "We were talking in the dining room, next to an exhibition grill," Desaulniers recalls. "All of a sudden the candidate said, 'It's kind of hot here by the grill, can we move somewhere else?' Well, that's not exactly what you expect from a chef. I should have known at the time, but I hired him because I really needed somebody. Sure enough, he couldn't stand the heat. He lasted five weeks."

Not every interview will yield such an important clue, but experienced hirers like Desaulniers have learned to use the personal interview as the litmus test for hiring. More than checking a chef's references or even tasting the applicant's cooking, meeting with a chef allows the restaurateur to delve into the personality of the chef to determine what that person would be like to work with.

## Look beneath the surface

"Sometimes you know right when they walk in the door," says Joseph Melz, executive chef at the New York Stock Exchange Luncheon Club and former chef at the Pierre Hotel and the Westbury Hotel in Manhattan. "I used to hire a lot when I was at the Pierre," continues Melz, "and I could tell by the way a candidate walked in and sat down. There was one guy who came to an interview in a T-shirt, with a pack of Marlboros in his sleeve and a couple of tattoos on his arm. I knew right away with that guy. I told him we had already hired somebody."

Of course, determining that a chef would be wrong for your operation is not always so simple, according to Christian De Vos, vice president of the fine-dining division of ARA Services, a company whose operations include the Carnelian Room in San Francisco, the 95th Restaurant in Chicago and Atwater's in Portland, Oregon. "It's not like picking out a loaf of bread," says De Vos. "You've got to talk to the person. Just because a chef has won some competitions doesn't mean that he or she can handle things such as cost control or managing a union house." The test for these extra-cookery skills has to come from the interview.

"You must read between the lines of their resumes and their answers," adds Gerrit H. Maneschyn, who as manager of a national culinary association is frequently involved in the placement of experienced chefs in new positions. Maneschyn is a believer in following intuition in assessing a chef's intangible qualities. "Many chefs can make good food, but they don't have what it takes to run a brigade," he says.

Maneschyn also warns restaurateurs to look beneath the surface during the interview for the traits of the proverbial temperamental chef. "It's very important to find out if the person has a temper," he says. "In France, they call that kind of person a 'screamer.' I wouldn't allow a screamer in my kitchen." Look for clues about a chef's temperament by asking some point-blank questions such as "How do you work under pressure?" and "How have you got-

*Paul Moomaw is a communications specialist at the National Restaurant Association*

ten along with kitchen staff in the past?" Candidates will often be surprisingly honest in revealing their weaknesses.

If you know the candidate personally or have some knowledge of the chef's temperament as the result of research before the interview, ask some frank questions about the most controversial aspects of his or her style. The candidate's reaction may tell you a great deal. If a candidate bristles with indignation at the suggestion of a shortcoming, it could be a sign of an uncooperative demeanor. On the other hand, if the person answers with a sense of humor, you might deduce that he or she would be more willing to accept criticism.

Maneschyn also urges restaurateurs to be aware of the signs of alcoholism in chefs. "Alcohol is a problem, unfortunately," he says, and he urges restaurateurs to look for outward signs of abuse, such as trembling hands, redness in the face and the smell of alcohol on the breath. According to Maneschyn, a chef with a temper and a chef with a drinking problem are often one and the same.

Above all, restaurateurs are advised to look for the traits of a team player, someone who can serve as both leader and co-worker. Think of different ways to ask the chef: "What do you know about human nature?" suggests Maneschyn.

In the past, a restaurateur could find out information about a chef's temperament by contacting the person's previous employers. Changes in employment laws in recent years, however, have intimidated previous employers, who fear lawsuits could result from giving complete information on former employees. Therefore, previous employers might paint a better picture of the chef than he or she deserves.

Another chef-hiring test that has fallen from favor is the kitchen test. How, then, can you judge cooking skill? The key is to ask the right questions. "I wouldn't ask a chef to prepare food," says Joseph Melz. "Instead, I would ask a question like, 'How would you start making a bearnaise sauce?' Unless the person is a con artist, you can tell what they're like by the confidence with which they respond."

Desaulniers says that there's a reason for the focus away from make-me-an-omelet testing, especially when hiring for sous-chef positions. "We'd rather have someone who has

## Where to find chefs

Before a restaurateur can exhibit savvy interviewing and hiring skills, quality candidates must be found. Where do you find a group of candidates that might be right for your operation? It depends a great deal on the size, type and location of your restaurant, but here are some sources.

□ **In your organization.** Looking within should be the method of first choice for finding a chef. Hiring a chef from within your organization maintains continuity in the kitchen and serves as a morale booster to sous chefs who can see the career ladder before them. Unfortunately, a small operation probably cannot afford this strategy.

□ **Classified ads.** Depending on the type of operation, this may or may not be a legitimate way to find a chef. Although some upscale operations shun this recruiting method, Marcel Desaulniers, co-owner and executive chef at The Trellis in Williamsburg, Virginia, can remember when a classified newspaper ad led to the hiring of a successful chef who stayed at the restaurant for nine years. "Classified ads are perfectly legitimate," says Desaulniers, "but you are limited to the geographic area of the newspaper circulation." Alternatively, Desaulniers recommends an ad be placed in a trade journal circulated to chefs.

Placing a classified ad is, of course, not a very secretive method of searching for a chef, which could be a problem if you are replacing a current chef or if you don't want patrons to know you are without a chef.

□ **Professional organizations.** Whether formally or informally, various organizations whose members are chefs sponsor placement services for executive chefs. Examples include the Chefs de Cuisine Association of America (CCAA) and the International Chefs' Association (ICA), both in New York City.

□ **Culinary schools.** By recruiting among graduates of culinary-degree programs, restaurateurs are assured that a candidate has had a formal introduction to both kitchen management and some restaurant business practices. Gerrit Maneschyn, manager of a national culinary association, reminds restaurateurs, however, that most culinary-school graduates are in the early stages of their careers and require more seasoning. "You cannot learn in 22 months what takes 12 to 15 years," he says, advising restaurateurs not to start inexperienced chefs at positions too high on the totem pole.

□ **Internships/apprenticeships.** Another way to evaluate potential chefs is to become involved in internship programs, in which students spend a few months in an operation as part of their degree program. You can also begin a formal apprenticeship program, perhaps in conjunction with an organization such as the American Culinary Federation in St. Augustine, Florida, or your state restaurant association.

□ **Executive-search firms.** When time is of the essence in hiring a chef, an executive-search firm, or "headhunter," may provide the quickest source of qualified leads. Using an executive search firm is also a discreet way to conduct a closed search if a quick change of chefs is necessary, and it can offer the advantage of nationwide recruiting. The disadvantage? Paying a contingency fee upon hiring that may run as high as $20,000.

□ **At your competition.** Finally, you have the option of stealing the chef you have always admired from your competitor's restaurant across the street. "It's certainly not a legitimate method," says Desaulniers, "but it happens all the time. It's happened here at The Trellis. A restaurateur has come here to eat a couple of times; then he asks to see the chef so he can develop a rapport and say, 'Well, if you ever think about leaving...' "

Stealing a chef, however, is not a recruiting method that will earn a restaurateur any Dale Carnegie awards. "I'd say that's a fairly quick end to a friendship," adds Desaulniers.

desire and ambition than someone who is already a great cook," he says. Young culinary-school graduates rarely have had time to hone their cooking skills, points out Desaulniers. "That's what I can offer them: a place to chop, slice, dice and burn their knuckles."

Joseph Melz agrees. "They don't have to know everything, but they must be willing to learn," he says. "You have to judge how fast a young chef can pick things up. Some people never learn."

### Get them talking

Desaulniers uses the personal interview to ask questions that will get a candidate talking. "I go on gut reaction," he says. "I don't ask tricky questions; I just try to let them talk. If you let the candidate talk, then you find out more as they go along."

"For instance," continues Desaulniers, "if I'm interviewing a culinary-school student, I'll ask, 'How's school?' They usually start answering by giving a pretty positive response. But if they keep talking, they may complain about instructors or chefs they have worked with. That is one indication that a candidate may not get along well with others."

During an interview, ask about a chef-candidate's experience, too. Find out what they have liked about past jobs, who mediated kitchen disputes and who was responsible for final menu decisions. Answers to these questions will provide more insight in the important area of human dynamics and will help you determine how a chef has functioned in another kitchen.

Watch for overstated claims of experience both on resumes and in personal interviews. Desaulniers advises restaurateurs to check on the experience claimed by a chef-candidate. "It appalls me that people in our industry don't check out references," says Desaulniers. "We recently did a reference check on an applicant, and the reference we called had never heard of this character. That's certainly less than professional. If someone comes in and says they worked for Mark Miller at the Coyote Cafe—or someone else I respect—I'm going to find out if it's true or not." ❑

*Jim Dodge, author of* The American Baker, *is well-known for his expertise as a baker/pastry chef and his bimonthly contribution on baking and desserts to* Food and Wine *magazine. He is fast becoming equally well known for his other passion: making "bread" for special causes.* ***Restaurants USA*** *spoke with Dodge at length about his involvement with and personal commitment to these causes.*

***Restaurants USA:*** **What first inspired you to become personally involved with doing demonstrations for charity?**

**Jim Dodge:** I've been doing it for years—I don't remember exactly when I started. Charities are always looking for creative ways to raise funds. Years ago, when I started out at the Stanford Court Hotel in San Francisco, I became aware of the problem of homelessness and hunger. When you live in a major city, you see examples of homelessness every day.

The Stanford Court's policies made me aware of how to help. All leftover food [from the hotel] went to St. Anthony's Soup Kitchen in San Francisco, and I would make sure that food was saved properly. So I've been involved almost from day one.

***RUSA:*** **Do you devote yourself to some charities more than others?**

**Dodge:** I am especially committed to homelessness, hunger and various medical causes. They are such major issues, and they need all the help they can get because the government is only going to do so much. If I have the time, I will also help out a symphony or another arts group. But when you talk about basic needs like hunger and homelessness, you're talking about life—and I value life a lot.

If it's something I really believe in, I just say "yes." In Fort Wayne, Indiana, I have helped out at Community Harvest. It's really a model food bank. It's incredible what they do. I also did a fundraiser for Mary Hitchcock Hospital in Dartmouth, New Hampshire. A lot of my family members have been treated there, and so that cause was also close to my heart.

***RUSA:*** **Do the honoraria you receive usually cover your costs?**

**Dodge:** I often do not accept any

# WHY JIM DODGE MAKES BREAD FOR CHARITY

honorarium for doing a demonstration. For example, I refused the honorarium from the food bank in Fort Wayne and the hospital in New Hampshire, because they clearly needed the money more than I did. I am not in a position at this point in my life to donate a lot of capital to these causes, but I can donate my time to help them raise money by demonstrating what I do for a living.

***RUSA:* How do you evaluate the requests you receive to decide which causes to take on?**

**Dodge:** Well, first of all, there's the cause itself, and I've already mentioned the issues I'm particularly committed to. Then there is the commitment of the people involved in the organization. There always has to be at least one person working on the event who can really pull the whole thing together. And finally, there's the percentage of the dollars raised that will actually reach the people affected by the cause. I prefer to support charities that don't have high overhead costs. The City of Hope is a great example. Out of every dollar raised, 98 cents go to the people they are trying to help.

***RUSA:* How much time do you devote to your charity work?**

**Dodge:** I do about two events per month. Each event requires about a day and a half of preparation. The demonstration itself lasts anywhere from one to three hours, depending upon whether it's just me or I'm part of an event. Just as an example, I took part in "Aid and Comfort," which was an AIDS benefit in San Francisco. It was organized on a really grand scale; it involved 10 or 11 chefs feeding more than 1,200 people. We raised about $250 thousand in just one night.

***RUSA:* Are you able to meet the demand for appearances at charity events?**

**Dodge:** So far, yes. I haven't had to turn down any requests for homelessness or medical research. I usually need about six months' to a year's notice, though, to be able to work something in.

***RUSA:* What kinds of demonstrations do you usually perform at benefits?**

**Dodge:** That depends on the audience, the season and the region. In general, I want to feature something that does not take a lot of time, is easy to prepare and tastes great. For instance, I have a recipe for "perfect pie dough" that goes over really well. That's something most people overdo, and this is an easy food-processor recipe.

I always try to make the demonstration educational in some respect: a technique or food pointers the audience can apply in their own kitchens. I try sharing some tricks of the trade, too, all of which can be helpful to even the novice cook.

***RUSA:* Are benefit demonstrations a good source of P.R. for you?**

**Dodge:** You know, more and more chefs are getting into this kind of thing, and there has been a lot of criticism about it, that they are just "in it for the P.R.." Wolfgang Puck is about as famous a chef as you can find, yet he's involved with almost every Meals on Wheels program in the country. He doesn't need the P.R.! He's just doing it because he believes in it, and I'd have to say that's true of most chefs doing this kind of thing.

It really hurts to hear people say that chefs become involved "just for the P.R.," because they have *no idea* what goes into the timing and preparation of these events. You have to specify all the equipment you will possibly need for the demonstration; list all the ingredients and often try to get them donated; arrange for volunteers to help out—some of whom don't show up. Finally, you have to prepare the dish and then serve it. The work is done under tremendously stressful circumstances. You'd have to be out of your mind to do it just for P.R.! If that's all I'm after, I can write an article and get much greater exposure with much less aggravation.

***RUSA:* Are there times when you feel spread too thin? Do you anticipate having to cut back as your own business demands increase?**

**Dodge:** Once you get involved in these things, you get to a point where you can't imagine *not* being involved, so I guess the answer is "no." I'm also active in a lot of educational programs on a consulting basis, so I do have to balance my commitments. I have no problem saying "no" when I can't accept a demonstration request; it just wouldn't make sense to overdo it and not do a good job.

I'm even allergic to bread flour, so my work really is a "labor of love," I guess. I have to be careful not to make bread more than two days in a row, or I will get really sick. I just feel lucky to be able to help out causes I feel strongly about by doing something I love. ❑

*Joan E. Herlong is a freelance writer in Greenville, South Carolina.*

# FIT CHEFS DON'T FIT THE "DOUGH BOY" STEREOTYPE

*Old stereotypes die hard, but eventually popular perception will catch up to the fact that most chefs no longer look like the Pillsbury Dough Boy.*

**by Joan E. Herlong**

Never trust a skinny chef, or so the adage goes, but that old saw hacks off a lot of today's chefs. The responsibility chefs now have for creating nutritional dishes, in addition to meeting the bottom line, inevitably leads them to pay more attention to the waistline as well.

***Restaurants USA*** spoke with five chefs in top form professionally—and physically.

## A waning stereotype

Bernhard Gotz, CEC, executive chef with the Sheraton New Orleans, often does cooking demonstrations, only to find his hosts do not believe that someone who is 36 years old, six feet tall and 180 pounds could be a chef. "I hear it all the time when I go to do a demo," he recounts. "They will say, 'But you don't look like a chef.' Just what is a chef supposed to look like . . . fat? I get a little offended. We are all shrinking away from the 'Pillsbury Dough Boy' image."

"In the media, everything emphasizes health, health, health—and cuisine is no exception," says Johnny Rivers, CEC, resorts executive chef of research and development at Disney World in Orlando, Florida. "We are constantly working on new dishes that are tasty and healthy. You can't work on creating healthy meals all day without applying that to your own lifestyle."

Ferdinand Metz, CMC, president of the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, concedes the "dough boy" stereotype was once grounded in reality—but is no longer. The public is simply unaware of the radical changes the profession has gone through in the past 20 years.

## Intensified interest in nutrition

"Today," says Metz, "the top chefs throughout the country are mostly very fit. Chefs have earned their professional standing today, especially in the last 10 years, with the intensified interest in nutrition. The Culinary Institute has a course in nutrition that every student must complete. With this emphasis on nutrition, it just wouldn't make sense not to keep fit. We apply what we learn every day."

Jack Braun, CEC, AAC, chef/owner of Chesterfields in North Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, and president of the American Culinary Federation, points to nutrition as the main ingredient in the changing image of chefs: "The American Culinary Federation places a major emphasis on nutrition, and that has to be demonstrated by our own members. By 1992, every certified chef in America will have had a minimum of 30 hours of nutrition education." Even in culinary competitions, nutrition has become a major evaluation criterion.

*Joan E. Herlong is a freelance writer in Greenville, South Carolina.*

## Pluses for fitness

Fitness in the kitchen makes sense for a lot of other reasons, too. Chefs mention increased efficiency, better stress management and improved self-esteem as beneficial side effects of keeping trim. Because chefs must exercise a lot more than the imagination on the job, fit chefs don't suffer from physical and mental exhaustion as easily.

As Braun attests, his daily work involves very strenuous activity—standing all day, walking a lot, doing heavy lifting. "Most modern kitchens are designed with employee well-being in mind; but you still have both arms, both legs and your head working all at the same time. Kitchens are a lot warmer than your average workplace, too. It can be physically exhausting," he says.

Bernhard Gotz believes regular exercise is part of his responsibility to be the best chef he can be. "One of the main reasons for exercising is to relieve stress. If you work out your stress, you don't have much left to take out on your employees. You have to constantly work with your people, to keep up their self-esteem, and to do that you have to keep up your own. I think chefs should set an example to be fit."

**Ferdinand Metz, president of the Culinary Institute of America, regularly competes with his students, many of whom are less than half his age. He faces all willing opponents on the tennis court, the soccer field and the ice rink. Metz even plays on the institute's soccer and hockey teams.**

For Ferdinand Metz, teaching by example goes beyond the kitchen/classroom to sports, especially ice hockey, tennis and soccer. As he says himself, "The best way for me to promote the importance of physical activity [to my students] is to do it myself.

"There are other incentives to working out with the students," relates Metz. "It removes me from the office of president, puts me right on the bench. It enables me to develop a different [more personal] relationship with the students."

A well-rounded athlete, Bernhard Gotz rides his bicycle about 200 miles per week, in addition to regular karate workouts and games on the racquetball court. He mixes business with pleasure as often as possible by working out with his employees, too.

"I like to get other people involved," enthuses Gotz. "I often work out with my sous chefs. Heck, I've had better conversations about business on the racquetball court than I've ever had in the office!"

## Nibbling away at fitness obstacles

Johnny Rivers says the stereotype of the portly chef nibbling along as he cooks is not just dated, but unhealthy and expensive. He cautions that nibbling is really not as much a temptation for a trained chef as amateurs might think.

But just in case, adds Rivers, "We have an absolute rule against nibbling in our kitchens. We have about 4,000 cooks at Disney World, so a little nibbling can add up fast. A chef with a tendency to nibble here and there can nibble up to 12,000 calories in just one day! That's a lot of calories and a lot of money being nibbled up. We are absolutely against that."

As a smart alternative to nibbling, Rivers's staff is invited daily to taste each dish offered. "We have sampling hours where the staff critiques samples from platters before each meal," explains Rivers. "It curbs the urge to nibble, and it better educates the servers to sell new dishes to our customers."

Raimund Hofmeister, CMC, executive chef at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles, California, confesses he is a shameless nibbler, but he warns his staff against nibbling mostly because it dampens creativity. "I write my best menus when I'm hungry," he says. "If I am stuffed, my ideas dry up. My sense of creativity is strongly linked to taste. If I'm hungry, I can sit down and write a menu and never test-cook it; I can literally imagine what it will taste like."

Jack Braun concedes he probably could write and prepare a menu without tasting it, but he also occasionally succumbs to the nibbling temptation. "I do nibble, yes," he admits, "but I am careful. There are certain characteristics of various food products you can tell from aroma or appearance. I don't have to taste the veal, for example, because I can assume the quality. But the sauce is a variable that I may want to taste. I occasionally stray, but normally I munch on fresh vegetables or fruit. I'm a salad-lover. When I do nibble, I find it actually curbs my appetite. I eat only one full meal a day, and that's usually after 9 p.m."

For Braun, out-of-town banquets have become a greater hurdle than nibbling. As president of the American Culinary Federation, Braun travels often and finds himself attending almost as many gourmet dinners as he prepares.

Without regular exercise, such a schedule could easily render a chef a real "heavyweight" in the kitchen. To keep fit, Braun sticks to a walking regimen with his wife; together they log three to five miles per day. In bad weather, they walk in a nearby shopping mall.

## Making time for fitness

Chefs are busy enough as it is, so they must build in time to exercise. Johnny Rivers, an avid body-builder, schedules one hour for exercise into his day just as he schedules regular staff meetings.

"Chefs have to learn to be time managers," he explains, "so regular physical activity is just another commitment you have to make and meet. You do get to a point where you look forward to it; your day is not complete without it." ❑

# GOODBYE TO THE WHITE-GLOVE TEST

## RESTAURANT INSPECTIONS ARE CHANGING

by Gary M. Stern

*Inspecting restaurants isn't like it used to be. Inspectors now realize dirty floors don't make people sick, and they are taking a closer look at how food is being prepared.*

**The five-foot-seven-inch inspector, wearing a plaid shirt and tie and beige pants, weaves his way down to the basement with his trusty miniature flashlight in hand. At any moment some type of pesky vermin—the Norwegian rat, the mouse, legions of cockroaches—could dart in front of his path, but he proceeds. Snapping on his flashlight, he rummages behind flour bins, peers into hard-to-spot corners, ferrets out possible violations. No, this inspector isn't Sam Spade or Sherlock Holmes but Gene Miskin,* a New York City Department of Health restaurant inspector.**

**Most violations, Miskin says, occur behind the scenes: in storage rooms, basements, preparation areas. This morning Miskin is inspecting a bakery in a major department store because of a complaint of mouse infestation. That is why his flashlight searches behind bins of cornmeal, muffin mix and flour. Bakers and food preparers, wearing white aprons, look on as Miskin moves aside bins and looks in corners and crevices alongside walls. After a couple of minutes, he spots small mouse droppings, whose brown gleam, he says, suggests recent vintage.**

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Over the last several years state restaurant health inspections have undergone considerable change, say leading food-science experts. "Most educated people will tell you that the trend is changing—away from floors, walls and ceiling to a hazard analysis," says Robert B. Gravani, associate professor of food science at Cornell University and past president of the International Association of Milk, Food and Environmental Sanitarians Inc., in Ames, Iowa. "Inspectors are looking at those areas of the restaurant where hazards exist and are trying to estimate reasonable risk of whether those hazards will cause foodborne illness."

In addition to inspecting the cleanliness of the restaurant, inspectors are looking for *critical-control points* in the food preparation process, where the food might become contaminated, where bacteria might survive cooking temperatures and where bacteria might grow if food is held at incorrect temperatures.

The system they are starting to use is called Hazard Analysis Critical-Control Points (whose acronym is HACCP), and it identifies which specific foods are at risk and the specific locations in the process line where mishandling is likely to occur. HACCP actually started back in 1971, when the head of quality control at Pillsbury introduced the concept at a national conference for food protection. Originally HACCP was aimed at food manufacturers, but in 1976 the concept started to be used by restaurant health inspectors and has since increased in application nationwide. Insiders say, however, that some states have experienced resistance to adopting HACCP principles, since inspections may take longer (which can mean fewer visits or a need for more inspectors, which can increase budgets).

Jim Brown, director of technical services at the National Restaurant Association, confirms that health inspectors are concentrating more on "food-contamination, cross-contamination of food and temperature." When a chef cuts up raw chicken on a cutting board and then—without washing it—begins to slice raw vegetables, he is potentially contaminating the vegetables with salmonella bacteria, which can cause food poisoning, he says by way of example. To help restaurateurs prepare for HACCP, the National Restaurant Association has produced a 24-page booklet entitled *SAFE (Sanitary Assessment of Food Environment)*, which provides a simplified version of the key concepts of critical-control points.

Many restaurateurs view health inspections as unnecessary government regulation, contending that inspectors don't understand the realities of running a profit-making business. But Professor Gravani of Cornell University contends that restaurateurs who emphasize cooking and holding foods at the proper temperatures, avoid vermin infestation, and create a well-run system in which restaurant personnel know and comply with health codes will save themselves money in the long run.

"Part of what HACCP does is to bring the manager into the whole picture so he knows the danger points and has himself or someone on his staff assigned to look after it," asserts Charles Felix, founder and editor of the *Food Protection Report* in Leesburg, Virginia. If a restaurateur or manager is determined that the restaurant not cause any foodborne illness, "he or she has to be an inspector, inspecting those areas that are critical on a daily basis," he says.

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**Miskin explains that he's responsible for more than citing violations. "[The job] is not only finding violations but also helping to figure out how to get rid of them," he asserts. He summons the manager, points out the droppings and recommends that the exterminator plug up holes where the mice are likely to come in. "We have a lot of construction," explains the director of foodservice in the store's defense. He informs Miskin that he will attend to this problem immediately. "You'll be inspected again," Miskin warns him. Miskin issues a violation that forces the restaurant, if it admits guilt, to pay a fine (from $40 upwards), the amount depending upon the adjudicator's verdict and the severity of the violation.**

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In Los Angeles, health-department inspectors spend much of their time concentrating on food temperature, says William R. Ward, director of district environmental health services for Los Angeles County. Inspectors check to see that all food served hot is heated (or reheated) and held above 140°F and that cold food stays cold at 45°F or less. Ward recommends that all managers use their own thermometers to insure that food is kept at the proper temperatures and that

*Miskin has since left the New York City Department of Health. He is now an assistant scientist with the New York City Bureau of Radiation Control.

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*Gary M. Stern is a freelance writer in New York City. He accompanied a health inspector on his daily rounds to get a first-hand look at how the job of restaurant inspections is carried out.*

the chances for bacteria to flourish are minimized.

In Washington state an outbreak of hepatitis-A has inspired health inspectors to pay careful attention to restaurant employees washing hands, since that's one major way that disease is prevented. "We are looking at what management is doing to ensure that food handlers realize that it is absolutely essential to wash hands after smoking, eating, drinking, coughing, sneezing and using the toilet," says Charles Bartleson, food-protection program manager for the Washington State Department of Health. Employees should be expected to wash hands and follow hygiene standards or suffer penalties, he adds.

Before HACCP entered the scene, inspectors concentrated on "the way places looked," explains Jack Guzewich, chief of food protection for the New York State Health Department. "HACCP is changing priorities."

Guzewich notes that one of the most common ways disease is spread through restaurants stems from employees who are sick. If a worker is ill, it's best that he or she stay home to prevent the risk of contamination.

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**Miskin fills out all the necessary paperwork and then phones the Department of Health office to report that he is headed for his next stop. On our way to the next restaurant, a fast food Chinese eatery, Miskin cites the most common violations he has seen since he joined the Department of Health in July 1988: dishwashing machines not working properly; mouse infestation, most common in storage rooms where flour is kept; lack of handwashing facilities; improper holding temperatures and problems in facility maintenance—floorboard loose; grease on wall; unsecured exterior kitchen doors, which increase the chance of rodents entering.**

**Telltale signs give Miskin a clue as to whether the restaurant management is staying abreast of food safety and facility maintenance.**

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Although the forms of most health inspectors include 25 or more items, most officials acknowledge that only four or five areas are of extreme importance because they represent potential risk areas. Dr. O. Peter Snyder, president and director of the Hospitality Institute in St. Paul, Minnesota, advocates a streamlined system that focuses on minimizing foodborne illness. Guzewich of New York state is of a similar mind and is clarifying what his inspectors must look for by developing what he describes as "a mini-HACCP" form. By following a more uniform format, inspectors will have a more definite sense of what to look for—as will managers and owners.

*If a restaurateur or manager is determined that the restaurant not cause any foodborne illness, he or she has to be an inspector, inspecting those areas that are critical on a daily basis.*

One way to ensure that health codes are being followed is to develop training programs for all employees. Chefs should be expected to know what happens when foods are cooked at certain temperatures. For example, when you cook a turkey thoroughly (165°F in the center), you are using high temperature to kill bacteria. Owners and managers, says Guzewich, should "be more involved in what's going on in the kitchen, seek out education in sanitation, be aware of how their staff is handling food and train all new employees." Gravani of Cornell University advocates assigning someone to be responsible at all times for monitoring food temperatures. The Educational Foundation of the National Restaurant Association manages a SERVSAFE food-safety certification program, which includes a training manual.

Certain foods should be scrutinized more than others. Because of the threat of salmonella, poultry is the number-one food to monitor carefully. Shell eggs have also contributed to disease, and that is why Guzewich, for example, advises against using shell eggs in hollandaise sauce. Other foods to scrutinize include beef and pork, raw clams and mussels, and deep-potted foods, like stews, which often sit on the stove to cool.

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**In the Chinese fast food restaurant, Miskin heads to the basement to check the storage area. Although dust has settled into some areas, there's no sign of rodent infestation and food is stored in bins with fastened tops, several inches off the floor. Moving upstairs into the kitchen, Miskin takes the temperature of beef and broccoli on a steam table. The food registers 150°F. In the kitchen, he sees some spilled flour and sugar on the floor, but food temperatures are acceptable and the food preparation practices demonstrate safe handling of food. Miskin tells the owner, "There are no major problems. You have passed inspection."**

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Besides keying in on foodborne illnesses, Peter D. Thornton, environmental administrator at the Volusia County Health Department in Florida and president of the Florida Environmental Health Association, reminds owners to "listen" attentively to inspectors. Many owners inform the inspector that "this is the cleanest restaurant in the city" right after 12 violations have been cited. The inspector "has the advantage of different eyeballs, so listen to what he has to say"—especially at the followup meeting. "That's where the education takes place," he adds. The inspector reviews each violation item by item and explains how to rectify each, often reviewing menus and step-by-step preparation schedules.

But the responsibility for a restaurant's safety remains with the restaurateur. Dr. Snyder reminds owners that "A restaurateur has got to say, 'It's up to me.' "

#110

# Spotting high morale

The level of employee morale is (or should be) of constant concern to management. Greater productivity, harmonious working relationships, positive customer feedback and more benefits occur when morale is high. The exact reverse is true when morale is low. It is possible to walk into organizations and get a sense of the morale level simply by the way people address you and smile, the snappiness of their gait, the pattern and tone of speech, etc. The following is a list of points you, as a manager, may want to keep in mind in assessing how "high" the morale factor is in your organization.

1. *People are frequently absent or late for work.* This indicates a high level of morale, because employees sense that they have great personal freedom in their positions. They can come and go as they please and not be fettered by rules, regulations or instructions. They can "do their own thing," which certainly must mean that their spirits are high.

2. *There is considerable employee discussion and comparison of pay and benefits.* As a general rule, people talk about what they like to talk about. Therefore, it holds true that if employees spend considerable time discussing and matching pay and benefits, they must like that subject; and within the context of your organization, morale couldn't be better.

3. *Turnover rates are high.* People like excitement and dynamism. High turnover rates mean that current employees are being replaced by new employees all the time, and that really can be exciting. Could it be that there is a relationship there—the higher the turnover rate, the higher the morale?

4. *When you approach a group of employees talking, they immediately stop talking and scatter.* Morale must be high when that happens. Employees cease conversing and return to their stations because they are anxious to get back to their assignments. They, no doubt, want you to see them working diligently at their tasks.

5. *Employees know everybody else's job better than they know their own.* Think of the flexibility and cross-training opportunities that exist with this situation. Employees can always learn their own job, but to know what their co-workers do even better is terrific. It's also particularly beneficial if employees tell their co-workers how they can do their jobs better.

6. *Management is often called upon to display and reinforce the chain of authority.* Morale must be high when employees must constantly seek determinations from a higher authority about who has what responsibility when. That certainly displays involvement on the part of employees and shows that communication is occurring—both cross-communication and upward/downward flow.

7. *Company-sponsored events are not well attended.* From time to time, most organizations have company-sponsored events, whether it's a Christmas party or a picnic. If very few employees show up and if those who do come, come under duress, you know that morale is high. Your employees' "outside" life must be rewarding to them, which makes for a happier "inside" life, doesn't it?

8. *Performance appraisals are not taken seriously by superiors or subordinates.* Written evaluations of employee performance are really a major paperwork chore, and most of them are inflated anyway; they don't provide an accurate description of the way a subordinate handled responsibilities in the past period. Since both superiors and subordinates know performance appraisals are unrealistic, they are not taken seriously. Therefore, because your employees are realists, it follows that morale must be high.

9. *Vacancies are filled with less-qualified people.* When vacancies are filled with less-qualified people, it makes everyone else feel terrific, because they feel that they are now a step up on the ladder—certainly higher than the dodo or the bimbo you just named to fill the open spot. Moreover, it shows that you are willing to give everyone an opportunity, and your subordinates will think that they may be in line for such progression as well. This situation does wonders for morale!

10. *Conflicts are taken personally.* Morale is high when employees take personally conflicts that arise as part of everyday functioning. If conflicts are taken personally, they won't be taken professionally or organizationally. So the deeper the personal conflict, the better (or more preserved) the organization will be; and that, in turn, reinforces high morale.

11. *Newcomers are blocked out of the organization's social network.* You can really identify high morale if new people joining your organization are kept in isolation by other co-workers and are not allowed to meld into the informal infrastructure. That way, newcomers won't pick up any old company gossip, bad attitudes and habits, which is good for morale. It also means that the informal group that keeps newcomers out is pretty strong, and strong groups indicate high morale levels.

12. *Major personnel decisions are bitterly contested by all who are consulted about them.* You can witness a tangible demonstration of high morale when interested parties are feuding over an impending personnel decision. That shows that each person cares deeply, protects or promotes his or her own people, and is willing to go to bat for them—or take the bat to them, as the case may be.

***Fisher's Law #110: The moral about morale is that the level of organizational success is directly and positively correlated with organizational morality.***

**World Food Day**
**October 16**

# 1990 industry operations report released this month

*The National Restaurant Association's new* Restaurant Industry Operations Report—1990 *allows restaurateurs to compare their own operation's data and statistics to that of other companies with a similar business profile. The study, which was conducted jointly by the association and the national accounting firm of Laventhol and Horwath, is based on 1989 data from 1,874 restaurant operators.*

A wealth of financial and operating information is contained in the National Restaurant Association's *Restaurant Industry Operations Report—1990.* The study contains specific information for each of the following types of restaurants:

□ full-menu tableservice
□ limited-menu tableservice
□ limited-menu, no tableservice (fast food) and
□ cafeterias.

Operating results are expressed as amounts per seat and as ratios to total sales, the most common bases used in the industry. The study details such information as sales (by food and beverage), cost of sales, gross profit, controllable expenses, occupation costs, restaurant profit and pretax income.

Also provided are seat turnover; average check size; cost per dollar of sales; and an analysis of employment, including employees per seat, sales per employee and the number of part-time versus full-time workers. These data are reported by specific operational characteristics, such as affiliation, menu theme and sales volume. The report includes amount-per-square-foot data covering sales, profits and occupational expenses.

## Enhancements

This year's *Restaurant Industry Operations Report 1990* contains a variety of new financial and operating data exhibits. The current edition, in addition to the usual extensive exhibits, includes new information on

□ operating data for metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas
□ employee turnover rates for both hourly and salaried employees
□ restaurant operating statistics by average check size per person
□ expanded coverage of employee benefit costs and
□ detailed operating data by restaurant location, such as in or attached to a hotel, shopping center, office building or club.

In future issues of ***Restaurants USA,*** a series of "Foodservice Trends" articles will focus on each of these report enhancements.

## Other highlights of the 1990 report

□ **Full-menu tableservice.** In 1989 the median check size for full-menu tableservice restaurants was $10.04—considerably higher than for the other types of establishments covered in this study. This reflects the higher-priced menus at

| | Full-menu, tableservice | Limited-menu, tableservice | Limited-menu, no tableservice | Cafeteria |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Where it came from** | | | | |
| Food sales | 79.9 | 87.9 | 97.1 | 99.9 |
| Beverage sales | 18.2 | 11.2 | 2.5 | 0.0 |
| Other income | 1.9 | 0.9 | 0.4 | 0.1 |
| **Where it went** | | | | |
| Cost of food sold | 26.9 | 30.8 | 34.8 | 40.9 |
| Cost of beverage sold | 4.8 | 3.4 | 0.6 | 0.0 |
| Payroll | 27.9 | 24.6 | 22.4 | 26.4 |
| Employee benefits | 5.3 | 4.0 | 3.3 | 1.7 |
| Direct-operating expenses | 6.5 | 5.5 | 4.8 | 3.3 |
| Music and entertainment | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Advertising and promotion | 2.3 | 3.6 | 5.3 | 0.7 |
| Utilities | 2.9 | 2.8 | 2.9 | 2.2 |
| Administrative and general | 4.8 | 4.8 | 3.6 | 0.6 |
| Repairs and maintenance | 2.0 | 2.1 | 1.7 | 1.3 |
| Rent | 4.5 | 5.1 | 4.5 | 4.3 |
| Property taxes | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.4 | 0.6 |
| Other taxes | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.5 | 0.1 |
| Property insurance | 1.2 | 1.0 | 0.7 | 0.6 |
| Interest | 1.4 | 1.9 | 0.8 | 0.4 |
| Depreciation | 2.9 | 3.1 | 3.5 | 2.7 |
| Other deductions | 1.3 | 1.0 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Net income before income taxes | 3.9 | 5.0 | 9.8 | 13.8 |

**Note:** *All figures are weighted averages*
**Source:** National Restaurant Association, *Restaurant Industry Operations Report—1990*

## Thanks!

**To the association members who supplied data to make this report possible, a special thanks. Your cooperation is appreciated; a complimentary copy of the report is on its way to you.**

these establishments and the fact that many full-menu tableservice restaurants serve alcoholic beverages.

Median food sales were $4,066 per seat. Alcoholic-beverage sales accounted for $926 per seat. Average daily seat turnover was 1.3.

□ **Limited-menu tableservice.** The median check among limited-menu tableservice respondents was $6.66 in 1989, with an average daily seat turnover of 1.5. Median food sales were $3,433 per seat, and alcoholic-beverage sales represented $773 per seat. Median sales per full-time-equivalent employee were $22,058.

□ **Limited-menu, no-tableservice.** Limited-menu, no-tableservice (fast food) survey participants reported an average daily seat turnover of 4.1 in 1989—the highest among the four restaurant categories covered by the study. Median food sales were $6,284.

Median annual sales per full-time-equivalent employee in 1989 were $24,226—the highest among the four restaurant categories.

□ **Cafeterias.** Cafeteria survey participants had a median of 40.5 full-time-equivalent employees. These establishments experienced an average daily seat turnover of 2.0, with median food sales of $3,768 per seat. Median annual sales per full-time-equivalent employee were $20,569.

*—Hudson Riehle*

| **Sales volume** | |
|---|---|
| Less than $500,000 | $ 7.78 |
| $500,000–$999,999 | 8.07 |
| $1,000,000–$1,999,999 | 10.31 |
| $2,000,000 or more | 12.80 |
| **All restaurants** | **$10.04** |

**Source:** National Restaurant Association, *Restaurant Industry Operations Report—1990*.

## How to order the report

A copy of the *Restaurant Industry Operations Report—1990* (CS955) will be available this month to association members for $39 and to nonmembers for $72. This includes shipping and handling charges (overseas orders require a 20 percent surcharge). All orders must be prepaid.

You may order by sending a check or money order to the National Restaurant Association Publications Department, 1200 17th Street, N.W., Washington DC 20036. For credit-card orders, call the association's Information Service and Library between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) at 1-800-424-5156 or (202) 331-5960 in Washington DC.

## 1990 minimum-wage-survey results

*On April 1, 1990, the federal minimum wage increased from $3.35 to $3.80 per hour. According to a recent National Restaurant Association survey on minimum wage,* restaurateurs responded with changes in their operations, including increased menu prices and a reduction in the number of employee hours worked.*

For the first time in nearly a decade, the federal minimum wage increased this April, rising by 13 percent, or $.45, to $3.80 per hour. An additional $.45 increase will go into effect on April 1, 1991, to bring the minimum wage to $4.25. Employers are permitted to pay certain workers less than 20 years old a subminimum training wage for up to 90 days.

According to monthly earnings data for nonsupervisory workers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the increase in the federal minimum wage has had a noticeable effect on average hourly earnings for nonsupervisory employees in eating and drinking places—raising the overall average by about 5 cents per hour from March to April and increasing the rate of gain in wages to at least 5 percent (versus 4 percent in 1989 and early 1990).

### Increased menu prices

A National Restaurant Association questionnaire, developed to assess the repercussions of the April 1 minimum-wage increase, was sent to key organization members in May. According to the survey, the most common step taken by restaurateurs affected by the increase was to raise menu prices. Fifty-six percent of respondents reported they had increased menu prices, and an additional 28 percent said they plan to do so.

Government data support the association's survey. According to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, menu-price gains ticked upward starting in April 1990 and are now averaging 5 percent above levels a year ago. In contrast, gains in the CPI for all items except food have moderated slightly since the beginning of the year. Menu prices had paralleled the CPI in recent years.

A majority of the survey respondents also reported that they have cut back or plan to reduce the number of employee-hours worked. Forty-four percent reported having taken this step and

*A survey developed to assess the effect of the April 1, 1990, increase in the minimum wage was sent to key organization members as a supplement to the May 7, 1990, issue of the *Washington Weekly*. Responses were received from 1,002 members, for a response rate of more than 7 percent. Results described here are for the 746 respondents operating in states where the state minimum wage was no higher than $3.80 before April 1, 1990. This excludes respondents from Alaska, California, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington.

18 percent plan to do so. Additionally, substantial numbers of respondents have or plan to reduce the number of employees (42 percent), add labor-saving equipment (38 percent) or cut employee benefits (28 percent).

### Non-minimum-wage employees affected

Survey results suggest that not only minimum wage employees have been affected by restaurateur responses to the hike. Among restaurateurs that reduced the hours worked, 78 percent cut back hours worked by servers. Other occupations affected by reduced hours include cooks (77 percent), dishwashers (73 percent), and buspersons (69 percent).

Restaurateurs who had reduced the number of employees were most likely to have cut back the number of service staff, including buspersons (70 percent) and waiters/waitresses (63 percent); however, cooks were also likely to be affected (54 percent).

When it came to installing labor-saving equipment as a result of the minimum-wage increase, kitchen personnel are most likely to be affected. Among respondents installing labor-saving equipment, 87 percent reported cooks were affected, followed by salad-preparation workers (70 percent) and dishwashers (47 percent).

### Ripple effects evident

The minimum-wage hike caused ripple effects. Fifty-three percent of respondents reported increasing wages of nontipped employees who had been receiving $3.80 or more per hour; this increase affected an average of 32 employees per establishment. Forty-one percent increased wages of tipped employees

*Average hourly earnings advanced 5 cents between March and April 1990*

| | 1989 | Percent change | 1990 | Percent change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| January | $4.68 | 3.5 | $4.87 | 4.1 |
| February | 4.69 | 4.0 | 4.87 | 3.8 |
| March | 4.69 | 4.2 | 4.88 | 4.0 |
| April | 4.69 | 4.0 | 4.93 | 5.1 |
| May | 4.71 | 4.0 | 4.96 | 5.3 |
| June | 4.73 | 4.4 | 4.98* | 5.3 |
| July | 4.72 | 3.7 | | |
| August | 4.74 | 3.9 | | |
| September | 4.80 | 3.9 | | |
| October | 4.81 | 3.9 | | |
| November | 4.82 | 3.7 | | |
| December | 4.88 | 4.0 | | |

*preliminary data
**Note:** *Percent change is over same month in prior year. Data is not seasonally adjusted. Excludes tips.*
**Source:** Bureau of Labor Statistics

*The most common response to the minimum-wage increase was to raise menu prices*

| | Yes, have done | Yes, plan to do | No | No answer |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Increase menu prices | 56% | 28% | 14% | 2% |
| Reduce number of employee hours worked | 44 | 18 | 28 | 10 |
| Reduce number of employees | 25 | 17 | 41 | 17 |
| Add labor saving equipment | 12 | 26 | 38 | 24 |
| Cut hours of operation | 8 | 7 | 59 | 26 |
| Cut employee benefits | 14 | 14 | 49 | 23 |

**Source:** National Restaurant Association, *1990 Minimum-Wage Survey*. Based on 746 respondents in states where the minimum wage was not $3.80 or higher before April 1, 1990.

*Many employees were affected by the minimum-wage increase including non-minimum-wage employees.*

| | Reduced hours worked | Reduced number of employees | Added labor saving equipment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Waiters/waitresses | 78% | 63% | 33% |
| Buspersons | 69 | 70 | 23 |
| Counter workers | 42 | 41 | 33 |
| Dishwashers | 73 | 51 | 47 |
| Cooks | 77 | 54 | 87 |
| Salad prep workers | 48 | 39 | 70 |

**Source:** National Restaurant Association, *1990 Minimum Wage Survey*. Based on 746 respondents in states where the minimum wage was not $3.80 or higher before April 1, 1990.

## Profile of a typical minimum-wage earner

- Most minimum-wage earners are teenagers, young adults and adult women who work at the minimum wage because they are relatively unskilled, have limited experience or work part-time.
- Approximately two-thirds of minimum-wage workers are in part-time jobs.
- Most workers are neither heads of households nor the principal income earner in their households; instead, they are frequently teens, students and spouses.
- The education level of minimum-wage workers is considerably below that of most other workers.
- Wholesale and retail trade establishments, which include eating and drinking establishments, employ more than half of all minimum-wage earners.
- Many of the minimum-wage positions in wholesale and retail trade also provide additional compensation, such as tips, bonuses or commissions that are not counted in assessing wage levels.

**Source:** National Restaurant Association, *Minimum Wage Research Review*, 1987.

to comply with the new minimum-wage increase, which affected an average of 43 employees per establishment. Nearly half reported increasing the tip credit from 40 to 45 percent.

The vast majority of respondents—82 percent—reported that payroll costs increased as a result of the minimum-wage hike. The average reported increase was 7 percent.

### Training wage seldom used

Although 74 percent of respondents reported employing teenagers and 93 percent said they were aware of the training wage, only 9 percent said they currently use the training wage and an additional 17 percent said they plan to do so. The vast majority—71 percent—will not use the training wage. Among those that are using the training wage, an average of 11 employees are paid the training wage.

### Most were aware of "interstate commerce" amendments

Most respondents—76 percent—were aware that the 1989 amendments require all employees engaged in "interstate commerce"** to pay the new federal minimum regardless of the small-business exemption. Seventeen percent were not aware of this amendment, and eight percent reported it was necessary to raise employees to new minimum wages because they were engaged in "interstate commerce."

*—Elizabeth Gordon*

**Being involved in interstate commerce can mean handling credit cards or traveler's checks, placing out-of-state phone calls, unloading a truck that has crossed state lines, etc.

## CREST* report—1990 spring quarter

*Following a modest 0.8 percent rise in customer traffic in the winter quarter of 1990, industry traffic advanced a robust 5.0 percent in the spring. However, this advance is smaller than it seems, if one takes into account the weak performance in spring 1989 when customer counts were down 1.9 percent over spring 1988.*

Upscale restaurants recorded the largest growth in customer counts, advancing a hearty 7.2 percent over spring 1989 and after a decline of 3.4 percent in the winter 1990 quarter. Midscale restaurants likewise rebounded from a 1.7 percent decline in customer traffic in the winter to post a 3.4 percent increase in the spring. Quickservice restaurants, the only segment to record traffic advances in the winter, continued on an upswing. Traffic counts were up 5.3 percent this spring, when compared to spring 1989 levels.

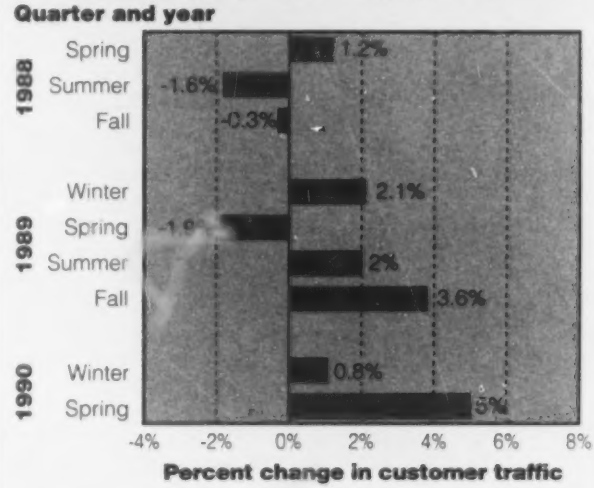
All three major meal periods posted advances in customer counts during the months of March, April and May. Supper posted the largest gain, advancing 6.4 percent. Lunch (up 5.6 percent) and breakfast (up 2.8 percent) showed more modest growth. Growth for the meal periods was substantially higher in the spring than in the winter, when counts were up 0.4 percent for breakfast, 0.7 percent for lunch and 2.6 percent for supper.

### On and off-premises highlights

Both on and off-premises traffic advanced for the industry as a whole. Off-premises traffic grew 8.2 percent and on-premises grew 2.4 percent, when compared with spring 1989. Upscale restaurants led the way in on-premises traffic growth, with an 8.3 percent increase. On-premises traffic grew by smaller margins at midscale restaurants (up 3.2 percent), but declined slightly at quickservice establishments (down 0.1 percent). Both supper (up 4.2 percent) and lunch (up 3.1 percent) registered growth in on-premises customer counts. On-premises traffic for breakfast declined 1.5 percent.

In contrast to their on-premises traffic loss, quickservice restaurants saw substantial gains in off-premises traffic (up 9.0 percent). Off-premises traffic was up 5.0 percent at midscale restaurants but declined by 7.6 percent at upscale restaurants. All three meal periods posted gains in off-premises traffic counts. Breakfast (up 11.2 percent) showed the largest growth, followed by lunch (up 9.7 percent) and supper (up 8.7 percent).

*Traffic advanced a strong 5.0 percent in the spring of 1990, after falling 1.9 percent in the spring of 1989*




*Percent change over same quarter, previous year
**Source:** *NPD CREST Quarterly Household Reports*, 1988–1990

*CREST stands for Consumer Reports on Eating Share Trends, a division of one of the NPD marketing companies.

### Promotion usage

Promotion usage this spring was well ahead of usage in spring 1989—20.2 percent of all occasions versus 16.7 percent of occasions. However, usage was down slightly from 22.4 percent in the winter.

Quickservice establish-

ments continued to be the leader in promotion usage; promotions were used on 22.2 percent of all quick-service occasions—up from 19.0 percent in spring 1989. Deal usage grew by more substantial margins at midscale and upscale operations. Promotions were used on 16.4 percent of all midscale occasions and 15.4 percent of all upscale occasions in spring 1990, up from 12.4 percent and 11.9 percent, respectively, in spring 1989.

Among the three major meal periods, deal usage was highest at supper, with 27.0 percent of supper occasions involving a promotion. This compares with 22.0 percent of supper occasions in spring 1989. Promotions were used on 17.1 percent of occasions at breakfast and on 17.9 percent of occasions at lunch.

### Average check size

The average check at restaurants increased 3.7 percent, from $3.79 per person in spring 1989 to $3.93 in spring 1990. Quickservice restaurants led the segments in average-check growth—up 3.6 percent to $2.91 per person. The average check at upscale restaurants increased 3.3 percent to $9.64 per person, and at midscale restaurants the average check increased by the same margin to $4.75 per person.

The average check at supper posted a higher gain than at any other meal period—up 3.9 percent to $5.10 per person. Lunch checks advanced 2.2 percent on average to $3.67 per person, and the average check at breakfast declined 0.8 percent to $2.57 per person.

*—Nancy Michalski*

## Consumer expenditures for food away from home increased in 1988

*Recently released data from the 1988* Consumer Expenditure Survey *by the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that consumer spending on food away from home accounted for 43.0 percent of the food dollar—up slightly from 42.7 percent in 1987. Expenditures on food away from home also accounted for 6.2 percent of total expenditures by consumer units in 1988.*

National Restaurant Association analysis of consumer-expenditure data shows that the typical household spent an average of $620 per person per year on food away from home in 1988—up 3.0 percent from $602 per person in 1987. Demographic data from the *Consumer Expenditure Survey* indicates that age and occupation of the household head, household income, household composition and household size all have an effect on per capita expenditures for food away from home.

### New breakdown by household occupation

For the first time, consumer-expenditure data is available by the occupation of the household head. Consumers are broadly defined as self-employed persons, wage and salary earners and retired individuals. Occupations detailed in the survey include managers and professionals; technical, sales and clerical workers; service workers; construction workers and mechanics; and operators, fabricators and laborers. Not surprisingly, the occupation of the household head has a direct effect not only on income but also on spending on food away from home.

According to the survey, households headed by a manager or professional had an average income of $45,088 and allocated more than 50 percent of their food dollar to food away from home—a larger share than those households whose heads were employed in other occupations. In addition, the households headed by a manager or professional had the highest total expenditures per year ($2,401) and the highest per capita expenditure on food away from home ($923).

Consistent with their average income, households headed by a service worker had the lowest expenditure on food away from home ($1,413 per year)—however, they did spend a relatively high proportion of their food dollars away from home. The lowest per capita expenditure for food away from home was recorded for households headed by an operator, fabricator or laborer ($483 per person per year).

By virtually all measures, retired individuals spent considerably less on food away from home than did either self-employed individuals or wage and salary workers. This is not surpris-

### For more information

A more detailed look at the 1988 *Consumer Expenditure Survey* is available in the new National Restaurant Association publication, *Restaurant Spending: Consumer Expenditures for Food Away From Home, 1988.*

The publication includes

- extensive, detailed tables
- information about household numbers, size, income, expenditures on food away from home as a percentage of food budget, percentage of total expenditures and a per capita expenditure breakdown for each demographic category
- cross-tabulation data for both household age and income and household size and income
- analyses of the demographic effects on spending for food away from home and
- spending indexes, helpful for targeting consumers with above-average expenditures on food away from home.

*Restaurant Spending: Consumer Expenditures for Food Away From Home, 1988* (order #CS730) may be purchased for $25 by members and $50 by nonmembers (overseas orders require a 20 percent surcharge). All orders must be prepaid.

Send a check or money order to the National Restaurant Association Publications Department, 1200 17th Street, N.W., Washington DC 20036. For credit-card orders, call the association's Information Services Department at 1-800-424-5156 or (202) 331-5960 in Washington DC between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

*Households in which the head was employed as a manager or professional had the highest per capita expenditure for food away from home*

| Occupation of household head | Average household Size | Average household Income* | Average annual expenditures on food away from home | Percent food away from home: Total food budget | Percent food away from home: Total expenditures | Per capita expenditures on food away from home |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All households** | **2.6** | **$28,540** | **$1,612** | **43.0%** | **6.2%** | **$620** |
| Self-employed workers | 2.8 | 32,320 | 1,776 | 43.0 | 5.6 | 634 |
| Wage and salary earners | 2.7 | 33,333 | 1,872 | 45.8 | 6.5 | 693 |
| Managers and professionals | 2.6 | 45,088 | 2,401 | 50.5 | 6.5 | 923 |
| Technical, sales and clerical | 2.5 | 30,756 | 1,767 | 45.8 | 6.3 | 707 |
| Service workers | 2.6 | 19,268 | 1,413 | 44.0 | 7.1 | 543 |
| Construction workers and mechanics | 3.2 | 31,497 | 1,845 | 43.4 | 6.5 | 577 |
| Operators, fabricators and laborers | 3.0 | 26,507 | 1,449 | 39.0 | 6.3 | 483 |
| Retired | 1.8 | 16,486 | 854 | 32.4 | 5.1 | 474 |
| All other, including not reporting | 2.7 | 14,145 | 836 | 29.6 | 5.1 | 310 |

**income before taxes*
**Source:** Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Consumer Expenditure Survey*, 1988; National Restaurant Association

ing considering that their average household income was $16,486 per year. Households headed by a retired individual allocated 32.4 percent of their annual food budgets to food away from home, and spent only 60 percent of what the lowest-spending wage and salary earners did on food away from home ($854 per year, compared with $1,413 for service workers).

## Spending highest among young, most affluent

Factors such as household income and the age of the household head exert a noticeable influence on spending for food away from home.

A special cross-tabulation of data based on the age of household head and household income—one of the most detailed breakdowns of consumer-expenditure data—shows the effect of these demographic characteristics on spending for food away from home. As a general rule, the amount spent on food away from home as well as the proportion of the food dollar spent away from home within each age category increases with income. In contrast, within each income category the percentage of the food dollar spent away from home generally declines as the age of the household head increases. (See the accompanying chart.)

***For the first time, consumer-expenditure data is available by the occupation of the household head.***

## The role of other demographics

Other household demographics, such as size, age of head, composition and region in which the household is located, also reflect differences in spending for food away from home.

*Household size*

□ Single-person households allocated a larger portion of their food dollar to food away from home than did larger households—52.7 percent—and also had the highest per capita expenditure on food away from home—$1,099 per year.

□ As household size increased, per capita expenditures on food away from home and the percentage of the food dollar allocated to food away from home decreased. In fact, two-person households spent 43.8 percent of their food budget, or $789 per person per year, on food away from home—more than $300 less per person per year than single-person households.

*Age of household head*

□ Households headed by an individual 25 years old or younger allocated a larger portion of their food dollar to food away from home—54.3 percent—than did households headed by older individuals.

□ Households headed by a person 75 years old or older spent the smallest portion of their food budget

*Expenditures on food away from home were greatest for households headed by individuals 25 years old or younger and households with an annual income of $40,000 or more*

| Age of household head | Annual household income: Less than $5,000 | $5,000-$9,999 | $10,000-$14,999 | $15,000-$19,999 | $20,000-$29,999 | $30,000-$39,999 | $40,000 or more |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Less than 25 years old** | | | | | | | |
| Annual amount spent* | $905 | $979 | $1,155 | $1,569 | $1,668 | $2,161 | $2,355 |
| Percent of total food budget spent* | 60.8% | 50.9% | 52.7% | 54.3% | 50.0% | 56.2% | 51.1% |
| Per capita expenditure* | $754 | $576 | $ 608 | $ 826 | $ 758 | $ 900 | $ 898 |
| **25 to 34 years old** | | | | | | | |
| Annual amount spent* | $760 | $562 | $ 960 | $1,279 | $1,620 | $1,835 | $2,606 |
| Percent of total food budget spent* | 32.0% | 27.0% | 36.3% | 41.7% | 45.6% | 45.0% | 50.0% |
| Per capita expenditure* | $345 | $201 | $ 384 | $ 474 | $ 579 | $ 612 | $ 899 |
| **35 to 44 years old** | | | | | | | |
| Annual amount spent* | $789 | $827 | $ 995 | $1,234 | $1,746 | $2,117 | $3,080 |
| Percent of total food budget spent* | 35.0% | 30.2% | 32.1% | 37.1% | 43.7% | 43.7% | 49.7% |
| Per capita expenditure* | $303 | $258 | $ 311 | $ 398 | $ 514 | $ 623 | $ 856 |
| **45 to 54 years old** | | | | | | | |
| Annual amount spent* | $883 | $592 | $ 989 | $1,274 | $1,740 | $1,995 | $3,282 |
| Percent of total food budget spent* | 30.4% | 23.9% | 33.1% | 38.1% | 41.9% | 43.2% | 49.5% |
| Per capita expenditure* | $384 | $237 | $ 380 | $ 455 | $ 621 | $ 688 | $1,026 |
| **55 to 64 years old** | | | | | | | |
| Annual amount spent* | $509 | $745 | $ 932 | $1,035 | $1,480 | $2,035 | $2,879 |
| Percent of total food budget spent* | 23.6% | 29.7% | 30.9% | 31.8% | 37.4% | 44.0% | 47.8% |
| Per capita expenditure* | $283 | $414 | $ 466 | $ 493 | $ 673 | $ 848 | $1,028 |
| **65 to 74 years old** | | | | | | | |
| Annual amount spent* | $415 | $582 | $ 905 | $1,098 | $1,543 | $1,792 | $2,673 |
| Percent of total food budget spent* | 23.1% | 28.5% | 31.4% | 33.4% | 39.8% | 41.0% | 46.3% |
| Per capita expenditure* | $277 | $388 | $ 476 | $ 523 | $ 701 | $ 747 | $1,069 |
| **75 years old and older** | | | | | | | |
| Annual amount spent* | $219 | $351 | $ 815 | $ 877 | $ 931 | $1,377 | $1,810 |
| Percent of total food budget spent* | 17.2% | 21.6% | 31.1% | 32.2% | 31.9% | 41.0% | 45.6% |
| Per capita expenditure* | $183 | $270 | $ 479 | $ 462 | $ 466 | $ 656 | $ 823 |

**on food away from home*
**Source:** Bureau of Statistics, *Consumer Expenditure Survey*, 1988; National Restaurant Association

on food away from home—29.2 percent—and had the lowest per capita expenditures—$377 per person per year.

□ Households headed by an individual between 45 and 54 years of age were the biggest spenders on a per person basis, allocating $762 per person per year to food away from home.

*Household composition*

□ Husband-and-wife-only households recorded the highest per capita expenditures on food away from home, $834 per person per year.

□ Single parents with dependent children under 18 years of age reported the lowest per capita expenditures on food away from home—$370 per person per year.

□ Single-person and other households, such as households composed of two or more unmarried roommates, allocated 48.4 percent of their total food budget to food away from home—a larger percentage than other households.

*Household income*

□ Not surprisingly, expenditures for food away from home, both on a per capita basis and as a percentage of total food budget, increased with household income.

□ Households with an annual income of $50,000 or more spent $1,028 per person, or 50.6 percent of the household food budget, on food away from home.

□ Households with annual incomes between $5,000 and $9,999 spent the least per capita ($336 per person per year) and the smallest portion of the total food budget—30.6 percent—on food away from home.

*Region*

□ Households in the Northeast region of the country were the biggest spenders on food away from home—$712 per person per year. This accounted for 44.6 percent of the household annual food budget.

□ Households in the South spent the least of any region on food away from home, $582 per person per year; while expenditures on food away from home in the West made up the smallest portion of the food dollar—41.9 percent.

*—Nancy Michalski*

# "Uniform System of Accounts for Restaurants" updated

*The association's popular accounting handbook for restaurateurs has been enhanced to keep abreast of changes in restaurant operations.*

Which costs should be included in employee-benefit expenses? Where should the expenses associated with using fresh flowers be charged? Why is the fee a restaurant pays to credit-card organizations considered an administrative expense?

Answers to these and many other restaurant bookkeeping and accounting questions are included in the newly updated National Restaurant Association's *Uniform System of Accounts for Restaurants*. Prepared in conjunction with the national accounting firm of Laventhol & Horwath, this accounting reference book presents an up-to-date and easy-to-use recordkeeping system for foodservice operations.

## Helps small operators

First published in 1958, the primary objective of the *Uniform System of Accounts for Restaurants* continues to be to help operators of smaller restaurants develop a common language to use in their accounting statements. Consequently, the *Uniform System* allows operators to compare their financial statements with statements of peers and also with published figures, such as those contained in the association's annual *Restaurant Industry Operations Report*.

An additional benefit of using the Uniform System is that it gives third-party users of financial statements, such as lenders, the opportunity to easily compare a specific restaurant operator's statements with industry averages, because they share a common format.

## Changes made

Enhancements to the 1990 edition include:

- Updated text to conform with the latest pronouncements from various regulatory agencies
- Up-to-date terms for outdated expressions
- A new corporate-overhead category to account for the allocation of overhead expenses for multi-unit restaurant companies
- A statement of cash flows to show the sources and uses of cash from operations, financing and investing activities
- An expanded description of the various methods of depreciation according to when the property was placed in service and
- Improved information on developing notes to financial statements that help clarify the accounting treatment of various assets and liabilities in the financial statements.

*—Hudson Riehle*

## How to obtain a copy

The updated *Uniform System of Accounts for Restaurants* (MG 936) is available to association members for $18 and to nonmembers for $36 (overseas orders require a 20 percent surcharge). All orders must be prepaid.

Send a check or money order to the National Restaurant Association Publications Department, 1200 Seventeenth Street, N.W., Washington DC 20036. For credit-card orders, call the association's Information Service Department at 1-800-424-5156 or (202) 331-5960.

*Using the **Uniform System of Accounts for Restaurants** allows for easy comparison of an individual operator's results with published figures, such as contained in the **Restaurant Industry Operations Report***

| | Amount per seat* |
|---|---|
| Sales | |
| Food | $4,066 |
| Beverage | 926 |
| *Total sales* | *4,827* |
| Cost of sales | |
| Food | 1,403 |
| Beverage | 250 |
| *Total cost of sales* | *1,661* |
| Gross profit | 3,160 |
| Other income | 34 |
| *Total income* | *3,259* |
| Controllable expenses | |
| Payroll | 1,544 |
| Employee benefits | 273 |
| Direct operating expenses | 297 |
| Music & entertainment | 16 |
| Advertising & promotion | 104 |
| Utilities | 174 |
| Administrative & general | 185 |
| Repairs & maintenance | 95 |
| *Total controllable expenses* | *2,810* |
| Income before occupancy costs | 767 |
| Occupancy Costs | |
| Rent | 304 |
| Property taxes | 29 |
| Other taxes | 21 |
| Property insurance | 62 |
| *Total occupancy costs* | *358* |
| Income before interest & depreciation | 364 |
| Interest | 73 |
| Depreciation | 138 |
| Restaurant profit | 177 |
| Other deductions | 78 |
| Income before income taxes | 149 |

**median values*
**Source:** National Restaurant Association, *Restaurant Industry Operations Report—1990.*

# Foodservice Market Measure—June 1990

On a typical day in June 1990, 55 percent of adults reported they were foodservice patrons, according to the Foodservice Market Measure. Although this marks no significant change overall from the prior month, the proportion of adults who reported eating on the premises crept upward from 34 percent in May to 38 percent in June. In contrast, 23 percent of adults reported purchasing takeout food in June, representing no significant change from May—although this proportion is significantly higher than the 18 to 19 percent reported in January and February. Also of interest is the fact that 7 percent of adults reported they were foodservice patrons for more than one meal on a typical day.

Lunch continues to be the most popular foodservice meal, with 30 percent of adults reporting they were patrons on a typical June day. This compares with a slightly lower 25 percent for dinner and a much lower 8 percent for breakfast and 6 percent for snacks.

## Spring quarter 1990

Quarterly demographics reconfirm that men are more likely than women to be foodservice patrons, especially when it comes to meals on the premises. Whereas 57 percent of adult men reported they were foodservice patrons on a typical spring day, a significantly smaller proportion—46 percent—of women were patrons.

Despite the fact that there are more adult females than males in the population, males outnumber females for on-premises occasions because of their greater propensity for eating at restaurants. Takeout occasions are evenly divided between men and women.

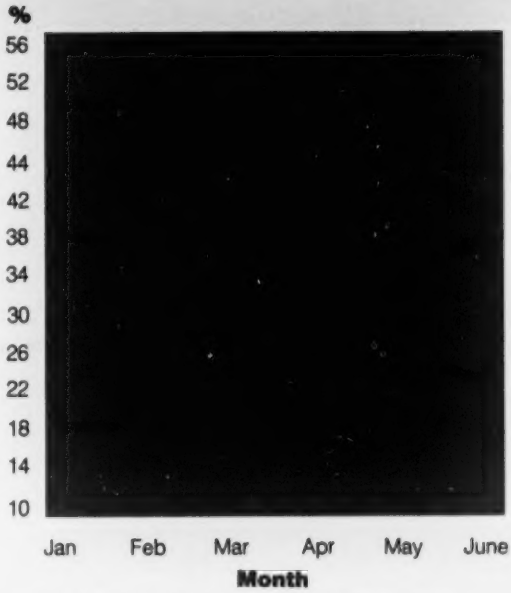
Behavior differs substantially by age as well. Younger consumers, 18 to 24 years old, are significantly more likely than all other age groups to be foodservice patrons on a typical day, especially for takeout or home delivery.

Thirty-seven percent of 18 to 24-year-olds used takeout on a typical spring day, but the proportion of adults who are off-premises patrons declines significantly for succeeding age groups.

In contrast, the likelihood of on-premises patronage declines much less as age increases, and there was little difference in the likelihood of on-premises patronage for patrons 45 years old and older in the spring of 1990.

*—Susan Mills*

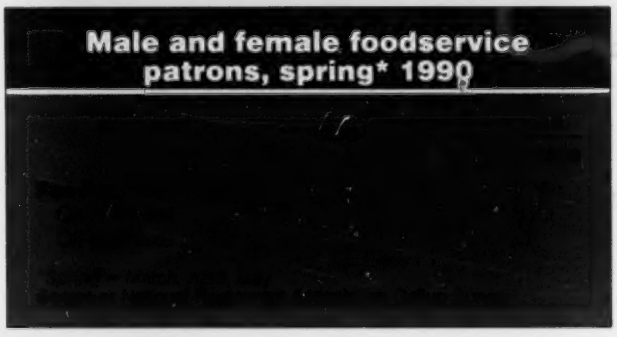
**Percent of adults who were foodservice patrons in 1990**




**Source:** National Restaurant Association Gallup Survey

**Foodservice patronage by age, spring* 1990**

**Male and female foodservice patrons, spring* 1990**

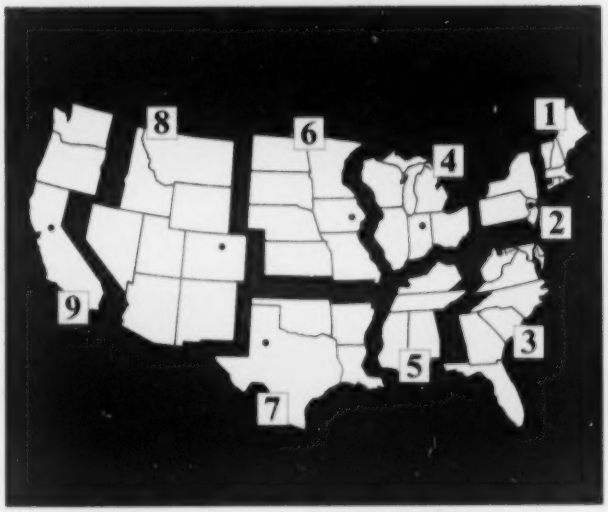


## Foodservice Market Measure

The Foodservice Market Measure is based on 1,000 telephone interviews, conducted by the Gallup Organization each month, with a nationally representative sample of adults age 18 and older. Each person is asked the same questions:

1. Which of the following did you do yesterday?
   - ☐ Ate on the premises of a restaurant, fast food place, cafeteria or any other place where you purchased a meal or snack,
   - ☐ Purchased takeout food "to go" or had it delivered.
2. Was the food you ate on premises yesterday for breakfast, lunch, dinner or a snack?
3. Was the takeout food you purchased or had delivered for breakfast, lunch, dinner or a snack?

The monthly tracking of purchases is supplemented by quarterly inquiries on topics of industry interest.




**Location:** Torrington, CT
**Association member:** Gary Arnold
**Operation:** Shiek's Sandwich Shop
**Profile:** Sandwich shop
**In business:** 20 years
**Seats:** 45
**Meals served:** Breakfast, lunch

"For being in an economically depressed area, business is pretty good," says **Gary Arnold,** whose family has owned and operated Shiek's Sandwich Shop for 20 years. The shop's clientele has changed gradually over the years—as professionals have entered Torrington's predominantly blue-collar work force. "It's becoming something of a high-tech region," notes Arnold, adding that many old factories in the area have shut down.

The Shiek's recipe for success is a simple one: high-quality food made from fresh ingredients. "It's nothing fancy," says Arnold of his blue-plate cuisine, "but it's all fresh." The family purchases as many ingredients as possible from nearby farms and suppliers. "We prepare our roast beef on the premises, and we have a local baker who bakes our bread in his garage. We make our own pasta and sauces here, and we buy our bacon direct, without any nitrates. You won't find too many cans in our place," he adds.

**Location:** Somerville, NJ
**Association member:** Timothy Maxwell
**Operation:** The Court Cafe
**Profile:** Upscale restaurant and banquet facility
**In business:** 3 years
**Seats:** 120, plus 250 in banquet facility
**Meals served:** Lunch, dinner

On a typical afternoon in downtown Somerville, county officials and well-dressed lawyers can be seen marching their clients through the town square on their way to The Court Cafe, an upscale restaurant across from the square. "We do a lot of power lunches," says owner/operator **Timothy Maxwell.** "This is the county seat of Somerset County, and all the county buildings are right across the street."

Summer is typically the slowest season for the restaurant, because Somerville lawyers take time off for vacations and because the nearby courts move into a slow mode. Banquet operations, however, are a source of continuing business.

"Everything on the menu is fresh," boasts Maxwell of The Court Cafe's menu. Maxwell rises at 3 a.m. on several days each month to drive to a New York City fish market to buy the freshest catch possible.

**Location:** Fairmont, WV
**Association member:** Rocco Muriale
**Operation:** Muriale's Restaurant
**Profile:** Midscale restaurant with banquet facility and catering
**In business:** 21 years
**Seats:** 230 plus 250 in banquet rooms
**Meals served:** Lunch, dinner

The town of Fairmont is poised for a growth spurt that should occur when the Federal Bureau of Investigation moves its fingerprint division to the area soon. "The area's in a definite upswing," says owner **Rocco Muriale,** whose business has been growing steadily in recent years at a rate of 12 to 15 percent.

Specialties at Muriale's include Italian hoagies, lasagna and ravioli, as well as steak and seafood entrees. The goal of the extensive menu, says Muriale, is to appeal to everyone with items priced for varying budgets.

Equally important, according to Muriale, is the level of service his restaurant offers. "People who come here often tell me that the food is excellent, but that the service is superb," says Muriale. Muriale trains his college-town employees extensively with films and tests. He follows this up with twice-monthly staff meetings that focus on the fundamentals of hospitality rather than on technical skill. "My philosophy is that it's more important to have a smile on your face than to always put the plate in the right place," Muriale explains.

**Location:** North Manchester, IN
**Association member:** Dave Clapp
**Operation:** Mr. Dave's
**Profile:** Counterservice restaurant and drive-thru
**In business:** 28 years
**Seats:** 56
**Meals served:** Lunch, dinner

Owner **Dave Clapp** is proud of his breaded-pork-tenderloin sandwich, and this year he got statewide recognition for it when he received the 1990 Pork Appreciation Award from the Indiana Pork Producers Association. "To stay in business today, you have to have a signature item," says Clapp. "For Mr. Dave's that item is the breaded tenderloin."

Mr. Dave's is located in a town of about 5,000, and Clapp says he has all the business he can handle. "We get an adult trade," says Clapp. "We have two large retirement homes here, and we also get business from up to 40 or 50 miles away."

The biggest near-term challenge Clapp faces is a local labor shortage, a situation that may worsen with the opening of a McDonald's restaurant. "Why they would want to open a McDonald's here is beyond me," wonders Clapp, "but this is one independent they aren't going to affect."

**Location:** Paducah, KY
**Association members:** Gayle Racca, Kathy Racca
**Operation:** Simply Cajun
**Profile:** Casual Cajun restaurant
**In business:** 5 months
**Seats:** 145
**Meals served:** Lunch, dinner

Introducing Cajun food to residents of western Kentucky has not been difficult, according to co-owner, operator and cook **Gayle Racca.** "Business has been good for our type of food," says Racca, whose specialties include such Cajun standbys as shrimp creole, crawfish etouffee, and chicken and sausage gumbo. For the uninitiated, Racca serves a Cajun sampler.

Co-owners Gayle Racca and Kathy Racca (Gayle's daughter-in-law) both hail from Louisiana, and they decided to open Simply Cajun after Gayle's son moved to Paducah and complained that no Cajun food was available.

Word-of-mouth recommendations have brought many new customers to Simply Cajun, and some locals have gotten their first taste of Cajun fare at one of the many banquets the Raccas have served, including a recent wedding reception.

**Location:** Amana, IA
**Association member:** Neal Schuerer
**Operation:** Amana Barn Restaurant
**Profile:** Midscale restaurant
**In business:** 7 years
**Seats:** 150, plus 200 in banquet hall
**Meals served:** Breakfast, lunch, dinner

"Business is very good at this time of year," says **Jeff Shaull,** assistant manager at the Amana Barn Restaurant, one of five restaurants located in a town of 800 people. All five restaurants rely on summer traffic from tourists who have come to visit the Amana Colonies, an Old World-style settlement where tourists can stroll through gift shops, witness furniture being made and visit an old-fashioned meat market.

In keeping with the regional theme, Amana Barn specialties include traditional German dishes, such as schnitzel, bratwurst and smoked pork chops. The Amana Barn also offers some American standards, such as prime rib and barbecued ribs.

In spite of its seasonal business, the Amana Barn Restaurant stays open yearround, which makes for a somewhat difficult labor situation. "We do fine attracting employees in the summer, when college kids return to the area," says Shaull, "but once school starts, we get in a bind. We can't over-recruit in September and October because we know that winter business drops off so much."

**Location:** Lubbock, TX
**Association member:** Don R. Howey
**Operation:** Kettle Restaurants
**Profile:** Midscale restaurants
**In business:** 9 years
**Seats:** 150
**Meals served:** Breakfast, lunch, dinner

"Business is up in all three of our Lubbock stores, even though we've had increased competition," says owner **Don Howey,** a Kettle franchisee. Howey says that recently several chains and independents have opened restaurants in Lubbock, even though it is a slow-growth area. "Of course, several have closed up, too," he adds.

A fixed-price breakfast bar has made morning a busy time at Howey's Kettle operations, and he's trying to boost lunch and dinner counts with a new menu. "We've added some fish and chicken items successfully, and we've expanded our dessert menu," he says.

Howey's Kettle locations are on major highways and near hotels, but he relies on locals—including many senior citizens—for repeat business.

**Location:** Greeley, CO
**Association members:** Roger and Sue Albert
**Operation:** Fat Albert's
**Profile:** Midscale family restaurant
**In business:** 9 years
**Seats:** 130
**Meals served:** Breakfast, lunch, dinner

"Nobody else here does what we do," says **Sue Albert,** explaining the success of her family's restaurant. Fat Albert's offers Greeley residents a diverse menu of American food, including the top-selling Monte Cristo sandwich.

Dinnertime brings many families to Fat Albert's, and they are welcomed by the proprietors, who have two children of their own. "We encourage customers to bring their families, and we give out balloons to the kids," says Albert.

Greeley is both an agricultural hub and a college town that is the home of the University of Northern Colorado. "When the college kids come back from the summer, that's a boost in the arm for business," says Albert, whose operation is just a mile from campus.

**Location:** Sacramento, CA
**Association member:** Catherine MacMillan
**Operation:** The Firehouse
**Profile:** Upscale restaurant
**In business:** 30 years
**Seats:** 500
**Meals served:** Lunch, dinner

For 30 years, The Firehouse has built its customer base with a charming mixture of tradition and change. Located in a historic district in Old Sacramento, the restaurant has grown from a neighborhood bar situated in a 19th-century firehouse into a fine-dining establishment that includes a 300-seat courtyard. In the midst of the restaurant's sprawling complex, the bar area retains its firehouse image, complete with a brass fireman's pole.

Owner **Catherine MacMillan** has made some recent changes, however. Most noticeable is an interior remodeling that has both spruced up the restaurant's appearance and made some areas more accessible to disabled patrons. The Firehouse menu, too, is undergoing changes made by new chef Ron Reicz, but many favorites are being retained. For instance, no change will be made to the grasshopper pie, which is prepared from a recipe passed down by MacMillan's mother.

*—Paul Moomaw*

## Battle of the batters

It was a case of dueling recipes that smacked of espionage, as Sheldon Golumbia—owner of the Royal Canadian Pancake House in Manhattan—and his competitors, Anastasios Lazarakis and Nicholas Alexandrakis—owners of the Village Pancake House in Greenwich Village, nearly went to court to establish legal rights to pancakes. The hotcakes in question are special indeed, not only in taste but also in size, some reaching a foot in diameter.

Golumbia claims that the Village Pancake House pirated the pancakes when it hired his former chef, Joel Fuenmayor. Not long after Fuenmayor's arrival, the menu at the Village Pancake House became nearly identical to that of the Royal Canadian Pancake House.

When the dust finally settled—out of court—the Village Pancake House was restricted from listing items on its menu in any order similar to that of the Royal Canadian and from using any of that restaurant's recipes. It must also follow strict size guidelines so as not to interfere with those of the Royal Canadian. Golumbia has been reported to go so far as to take a tape measure to the competition to ensure that such practices are strictly enforced.

*—The Wall Street Journal*

## Chefs say "no" to pre-packaged portions

In this age of microwaves, drive-thrus and home delivery, convenience seems to be the ultimate goal of most consumers; but the majority of chefs still prefer to do their work from scratch.

Sixty-five percent of the 137 restaurateurs surveyed by Pelouze Scale Co. of Evanston, Illinois, at the 1990 National Restaurant Association Show reported that their staffs do not use pre-packaged ingredients or portions. Even those that did report such usage said it was only in small amounts. Thirty-seven percent of this group said their pre-packaged food use is 10 percent or less; 18 percent reported usage is between 11 and 20 percent; and 26 percent said it is between 21 and 30 percent.

—DeFrancesco Goodfriend Public Relations

## Potty parity

As of June 1, 1990, women in New York state will no longer have to wait in long restroom lines while men walk right in. A new "potty parity" law is on the books to ensure equality. (The idea is not new; California became the first equal-opportunity-restroom state in 1987.)

The new New York statute requires all new public facilities, including restaurants, theaters and bars, to install just as many stalls in the women's restrooms as there are stalls and urinals in the men's counterpart, in order to process an equal number of patrons.

Rationale for this law was fueled by a 1988 study at Cornell University, which reported that women spend an average of 80 seconds in the restroom (not including sink and mirror time), compared to 45 seconds spent by men. Similar legislation is cropping up in other parts of the country.

*—NACS SCAN*

## Chef chat

Having a crisis in the kitchen? Hold on, help is only a phone call away. The Sheraton Grande Torry Pines in La Jolla, California, recently connected its "Chef's Hotline" [(619) 450-4527] as a special service to the local community and guests at the 400-room hotel. The hotline, which operates between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m., allows callers of all skill levels to speak directly to a member of the hotel's professional culinary staff about everything from helpful hints to recipes. "I am constantly asked tricks of the trade," says hotline creator and executive chef Jim Coleman. "Now through the 'Chef's Hotline,' the local public can consult directly with us on anything from soup to nuts."

*—Market Watch*

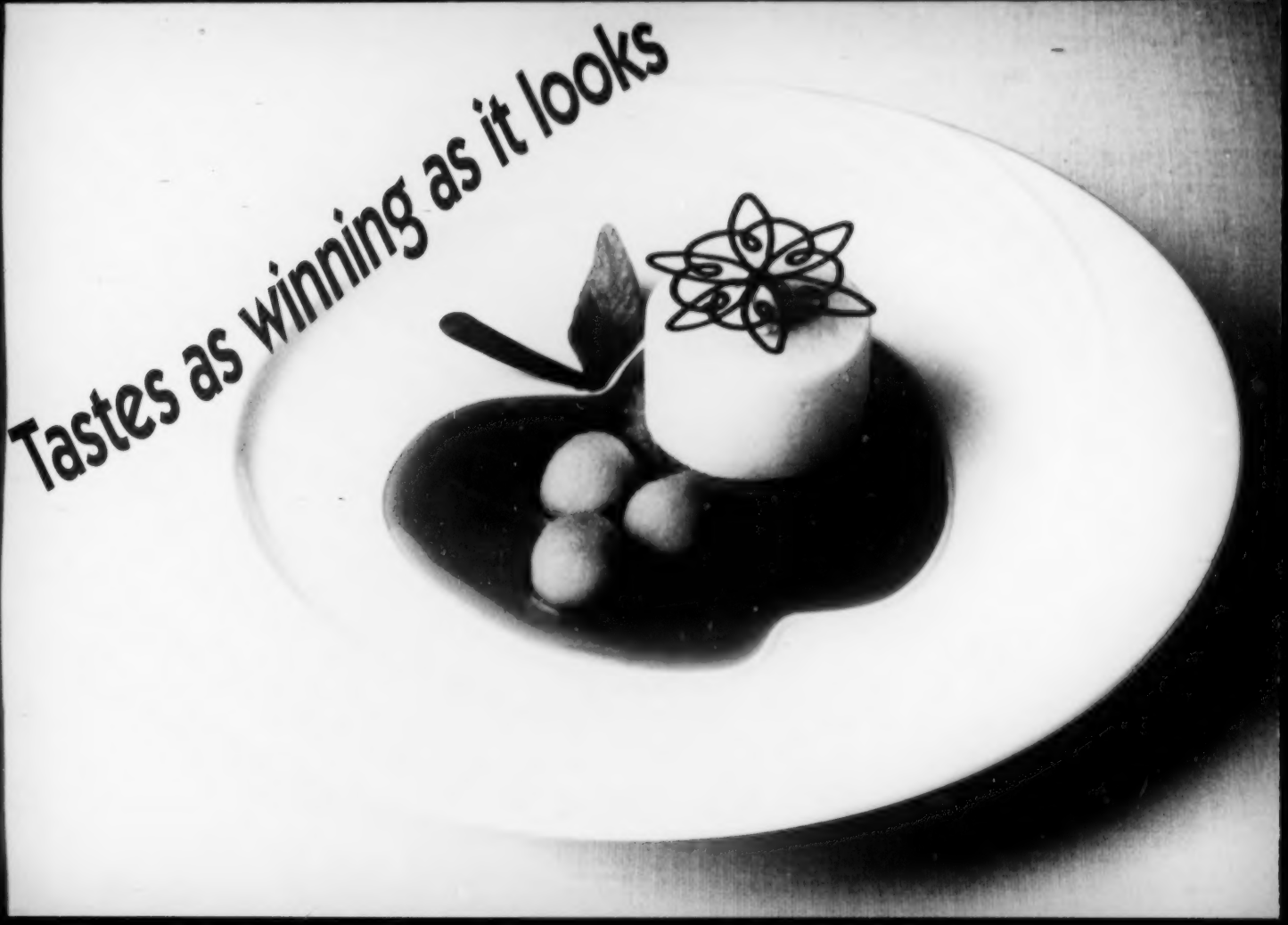
## Spreading good flavor—before its time?

For customers used to spreading butter on their bread, being presented with an alternative—no matter how tasty—can be a little unsettling. That's what three restaurants in the Philadelphia area discovered when they removed butter from their tabletops and replaced it with olive oil.

At Apropos the oil is served with bread. At Auburn's it is offered for dipping—with the addition of basil and garlic for a little zest. Stazi Milano infuses its olive oil with chili peppers and encourages customers to pour the mixture on fresh peasant-style bread.

Although the restaurants still champion olive oil over butter, they have relented on their "no butter" policy and will bring butter to the table if a guest requests it.

*—Philadelphia Inquirer*

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